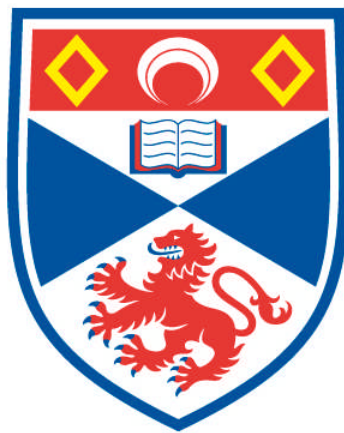


**UZBEKISTAN'S SELF-RELIANCE 1991-2010 :
PUBLIC POLITICS AND THE IMPACT OF ROLES IN
SHAPING BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Bernardo da Silva Relva Teles Fazendeiro

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews**



2013

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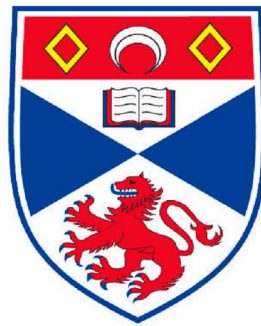
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Uzbekistan's Self-Reliance 1991-2010: Public Politics and the impact of Roles in shaping Bilateral Relationships

Bernardo da Silva Relva Teles Fazendeiro

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the
University of St. Andrews



2013

Abstract

This thesis applies role theory to understand how Uzbekistan's bilateral relationships became either conflicting or cooperative between 1991 and 2010. Roles are key elements of social interaction as they describe plausible lines of action in a particular subject-person. They are thus a helpful way of identifying actors and constructing narratives. Furthermore, if they are seen as metaphors for drama, one may argue that roles - as opposed to personal identities - encapsulate autonomous action, which, like a text, ascertains meaning beyond the author's intent. In other words, by separating action from intent, one may regard politics in a different light - as interaction emplotted by roles -, thereby revealing how actions contradict a set of roles and lead to conflict and crises in public credibility. This manner of emplotting relationships divulges an alternative story that, rather than focusing on Tashkent's strategic balancing and alignment, demonstrates how Uzbekistani leadership gradually developed an overarching self-reliant role set that shapes its actions. Moreover, Uzbekistan's cooperative and conflicting relationships are described less in light of strategic survival rationale than as the outcome of gradual role compatibilities arising through time. Therefore, unlike some other accounts, this thesis argues that, throughout Uzbekistan's first twenty years of independence, public disputes were crucial to understanding interaction and also that Tashkent was never actually aligned with Russia or the United States. To bring forth this argument, the following chapters expound the assumptions behind some scholarly research and develop the concepts of self-reliance, roles, action, public sphere, credibility and narrative. The discussion progresses toward self-reliance and how the concept captures President Karimov's roles, which are used to emplot Uzbekistan's interaction with the United States, Russia, Germany and Turkey. The first two are relevant for analyzing whether roles reveal more than the typical accounts based on security balancing. Germany is then included because its relationship with Tashkent was rarely conflicting in the public sphere, allowing it to increase bilateral trade and secure a military base in Uzbekistan after the 2005 Andijan Crisis. It was thus a relatively stable connection, unlike Tashkent's relationships with Washington and Moscow. Lastly, to control Germany's middle-power status, the case of Turkey is brought to the fore since Ankara's willingness to engage with Tashkent was not enough to foster cooperation.

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I was admitted as a research student in September 2009 and as a candidate for the degree of PhD in May 2013; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2009 and 2013.

(If you received assistance in writing from anyone other than your supervisor/s):

I, Bernardo Teles Fazendeiro, received assistance in the writing of this thesis in respect of language, which was provided by Naomi Elizabeth Court, Rev. Dr. Peter Doble and Bridget Gevaux.

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Acronyms

AKP – Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (Justice and Welfare Party)
CAU – Central Asian Union
CDU – Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (Christian Democratic Union of Germany)
CENTCOM – Central Command
CENTRASBAT – Central Asian Battalion
CIS – Commonwealth of Independent States
CPUzSSR – Communist Party of the Uzbek SSR
CRRF - Collective Rapid Reaction Forces
CST – Collective Security Treaty
CSTO – Collective Security Treaty Organization
DoD – Department of Defense
DoS – Department of State
ECO – Economic Cooperation Organization
EUCOM – European Command
Eurasec – Eurasian Economic Community
FDP – Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party)
ICRC – International Committee of the Red Cross
IMF – International Monetary Fund
IMU – Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
ISAF – International Security Assistance Force
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OECD – Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE – Organization for Security Co-operation in Europe
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
PfP – Partnership for Peace
SCO - Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SPD – Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
SSR – Soviet Socialist Republic
TAPO – *Tashkentskoe Aviacionnoe Proizvodstvennoe Ob’edinenie* (Tashkent Aviation Production Association)
UN – United Nations
UNCTAD – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UTO – United Tajik Opposition
WP – Welfare Party

Preface: Notes on Transliteration and Sources

As this is a work written in English covering Uzbekistan's relationships with other countries communicating in different languages (Uzbek, Russian, German and Turkish), an overall standard of transliteration is required to avoid confusion and inconsistency. Uzbekistan's government adopted a latinized script in 1995, which greatly facilitates the task (it is important to be aware, however, that Cyrillic slogans and books are still commonplace). Following Uzbekistan's decision, the United States Board on Geographic Names (BGN) and the British Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (PCGN) agreed in 2000 for Uzbekistan's new alphabet to be used in their official geographical spellings of the country. Hence, in conformity with standardization procedures, this work presents Uzbekistani names and locations according to Uzbekistan's latinized alphabet, with the exception of English conventional names (e.g. Bukhara, Samarkand, Andijan, Tashkent, Amu Darya). The same practice is applied to the two other latinized alphabets covered in this thesis, namely German and Turkish, regardless of certain diacritic letters not existing in English. The Russian script, on the other hand, is transliterated according to PCGN conventions, with the exception of English conventional nouns (e.g. Moscow).

Furthermore, the thesis refers to Uzbekistan's nationals as Uzbekistani rather than Uzbek, given that Tashkent's foreign policy has been predicated on territoriality as opposed to nationality or ethnicity (Fumagalli 2007b). The term Uzbek is only used if it refers directly to the specific ethnicity or language. Despite the rise of what could be regarded as nationalism, the geographic territory still remains the official source of official identity. For example, after the 2010 massacre of Uzbeks in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan's current leadership barely commented on the events (a decision that was not well appreciated by some Uzbekistani citizens, as I observed during my travels at the time). Moreover, even during the 1990s, when President Karimov took steps to support General Rashid Dostum, an ethnic Uzbek in northern Afghanistan, he conveyed that solidarity was not due to ethnic convergence, but instead to agreement on policy.

As concerns the referencing procedures, the Harvard system was applied throughout. The standard, however, was slightly adapted, in light of the vast number of transcripts and other unauthored sources used in the last part of the thesis. Consequently, those unauthored references were placed as footnotes in order to make the main body of text smoother and less confusing to read. Also, anonymous references, like *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, were almost all obtained from *Nexis UK* – a vast online data base. Hence, if not otherwise indicated, the reader should regard those sources as obtained from *Nexis UK*.

Introduction: Uzbekistan's bilateral relations and their difficult assessment

Opacity and the problem of assuming intent

Uzbekistan is a challenging case for studying politics and international relations. On one hand, the overall foreign policy rationale of its regime remains somewhat shrouded in mystery and, on the other, its unstable relations with a number of countries make it difficult to understand the reasons, goals and repercussions of its actions. Indeed, unlike Turkmenistan's own opacity and systematic 'positive neutrality', Uzbekistan's external relations with Russia and the United States were characterized by several periods of friction from 1991 to 2010. This perhaps explains why, even today, discussions on Uzbekistani politics are enveloped in conspiracy theories and dichotomous perspectives; split, more or less, between those who argue that the regime simply pockets financial and political gain from the international system (e.g. Lewis 2008) and those who state that it actually implements a consistent, albeit controversial, policy for its political economy (e.g. Spechler 2008).¹ Similarly, in thirteen confidential interviews conducted between 2010 and 2012, there was no consensus as to the interests and preferences of Uzbekistan's government.² Some even argued that no actual foreign policy existed.

Given the conundrum behind Tashkent's intent, many geopolitical analysts bring order to the political environment by positing that Uzbekistan's regime seeks to balance against competing powers (see Chapter I). This way of understanding events provides a conceptual framework that seemingly captures the so-called shifts in the country's relationships. However, it also propounds a distinct set of problems as it reproduces the image that security and strategic calculation are pivotal to Tashkent's interaction – a problem that can be otherwise avoided if no such assumptions regarding the government's intrinsic preferences and intent are taken. For that reason, it is appropriate to make some preliminary observations about the impact of opacity, inferring intent and taking certain preferences as given. This may then contextualize why balancing might not be the most suitable approach.

Despite opacity, scholars have attempted to trace the causes for a number of Tashkent's practices. One current and noteworthy attempt is found in Alexander

¹ Some might argue that this is the case for any political environment. Any political action is obviously open to contestation and distinct interpretations. Yet, with Uzbekistan, this level of uncertainty is even more pervasive and exacerbated. The fact that no actual opposition parties, independent media or open political debate exist, alongside a highly secretive authoritarian regime and repressive security service, makes it even more difficult to ascertain the rationale behind almost any decision.

² Interview sources (2009-2012). See Appendix IV for information regarding sources and procedures.

Cooley's (2012) book, *Great Games, Local Rules*, which portrays quite convincingly how global powers are unable to escape from the priorities and rules imposed by Central Asian Republics.³ Cooley (2012: 27; 48) focuses on a number of cases and his account demonstrates some of the dubious transactions involving Gulnara Karimova, the eldest daughter of the President of Uzbekistan. Her business deals are explained by making full use of telegrams issued by the American Embassy in Tashkent, recently leaked by Wikileaks. Indeed, resorting to this type of material evinces how difficult it is to depict Tashkent's secretive politics and obtain reliable sources. Still, while it seems clear that extracting profit and seeking security guarantees are part of the narrative, resorting primarily to patrimonial exchanges and the elite's need for survival (Cooley 2012: 16; 21-29), makes local politics seem almost analogous to financial transactions, leading to a uni-dimensional picture of Central Asian society. This becomes even more problematic because other international elites are not portrayed in the same light. For instance, in Cooley's (2012: 139-140) accounts of the Kazakhgate and Giffen affairs, the scholar demonstrates persuasively how a number of American oil companies and individuals purveyed hidden payments to Kazakh companies and officials. In Uzbekistan, too, a number of suspicious cases involving German companies have come into the international spotlight (see Chapter VI). Should one not then consider all those foreign actors and powerful businesses as profit-seeking elites too? So, how useful are profit-seeking preferences, survival and the label 'elite' if one is unable to identify clearly who all those actors are and their specific intentions?⁴

Naturally, the purpose here is not to argue that corruption in Central Asia is easily comparable to other regions. The sheer number of incidents in that part of the world reveals that malfeasance is especially problematic.⁵ The point though is that Uzbekistani politicians are not more cunning than their foreign counterparts, and that accounts based on pursuing profit, manipulating great power interests and balancing against competitors are limited and sometimes even detrimental to understanding the region. Local leaders also need to pay heed to the promises they make to their international partners and domestic constituencies. When accessing those in control is difficult, narratives based on the intention to survive and profit-seeking, for example,

³ David Lewis (2008) also provides a lengthy depiction of Uzbekistan's authoritarian politics and its controversial economic policies. Cooley (2012), however, looks more into the geopolitical context, thereby putting forth some of the issues that this thesis aims to counter. For a more detailed discussion on authors who focus on Uzbekistani foreign policy, see Chapter I.

⁴ Of course some research on Central Asia has focused on characterizing the elite level politics and their rise to power. For instance, Sally Cummings (2005: 38-58), using a wide collection of interviews, characterizes Kazakhstan's elite and demonstrates how a specific group of individuals rose to prominence and consolidated power.

⁵ Practically all interviewees from 2009 to 2012 agreed that corruption was a problem in Uzbekistan. See Appendix IV for information regarding sources.

may often serve to reproduce the idea of Central Asia being a hub of conspiracies, rather than just any other place of political interaction, where power, profit, ideas, emotions and violence all come to the fore. It is important to be aware, though, that Cooley (2012) makes a very strong case about one side of Central Asian politics and Chapter I explores how some other scholars took a strict number of preferences regarding survival and rationality.

Let us return now to the issue of balancing. Explaining how Uzbekistan's relationships shift by presupposing that Tashkent intends to play one against the other, may misleadingly lead one toward theories of alignment and realignment.⁶ Like Cooley (2012), the narrative becomes slightly one-sided and mechanical and other less conflicting relationships tend to be ignored since they are not straightforward cases of tactical calculation and relative gains. For that reason, analyses have tended to focus almost exclusively on Tashkent's interaction with the great powers, particularly on the difficult relationships with Moscow and Washington (see Chapter I). Due to the focus on balancing, those two relations are regarded as closely interconnected. So, the possibility of each relationship having an independent dynamic is downplayed considerably. Furthermore, as objects of study, balancing and especially the idea of realignment, may make Tashkent seem like a place of relatively inconsistent or even unpredictable foreign policy.

These issues raise the question of whether it is fair to use concepts such as balancing and alignment for depicting Uzbekistan's interaction – points which are revisited in Chapter I and in the Conclusion. However, despite the difficulties, it is still possible to explain how Uzbekistan's relationships varied across time – an explanation which may, however, not be typically causal in the Humean sense.⁷ Despite the restriction, though, there are in fact a number of factors that allow for inquiry to take place. The President of Uzbekistan, Islom Karimov, expressed his views throughout his rule and these statements were, by definition, not private but set in the open. Therefore, one need not enter the mind of the interlocutor nor infer intrinsic preferences and beliefs to ascertain intent, i.e. the intrinsic purpose of action. Beliefs, evidently, do make up the attitude of an agent, which shape intent (Ajzen & Fishbein 1980: 47-63), and so some scholars have called for determining the agent's preferences or belief systems (e.g. Goldstein & Keohane 1993: 13-17; Shapiro & Bonham 1973). Still,

⁶ Robert Cox (1981: 132) would argue that a concept like balancing, derived from the assumptions of political realism, induces a mode of thinking that also performs a proselytising function as the advocate of this form of rationality. Hence it may mislead analysis toward always depicting action in that manner.

⁷ Causal explanations require exogenous preferences to explain action (Goldstein & Keohane 1993:5), which are not entirely available in Uzbekistan. Since it has not been possible to obtain biographical information of Uzbekistani policy makers and their decision-making procedures, the political process might be the best way of studying bilateral relationships. See Wendt's (1992) study on the differences between causal explaining and process.

delving into the mind of the other is a complex endeavour because beliefs, while existent, cannot be observed directly (Rokeach 1976: 2). Specific preferences and intrinsic beliefs do of course matter and one cannot ignore that many actions are not congruent with rhetoric and thus aimed at manipulation,⁸ but positing strict exogenous preferences downplays how they might change over time. As Alexander Wendt (1992: 407) explicated: ‘the forms of identity and interest that constitute such dilemmas (...) are themselves ongoing effects of, not exogenous to, the interaction; identities are produced in and through “situated activity”.’

So looking into a process of public interaction might be one way of studying international politics and Chapter II develops these core assumptions. Alan Finlayson (2007: 549; 552) recognized that politics is a place where traditions, arguments and rival narratives clash and are constantly subject to dispute. Regardless of the private intentions behind different agendas, statements as well as non-verbal actions affect social interaction and open up new possibilities. They influence international interaction, since ‘all politics is shaped through the webs of meaning that are developed, both intentionally and otherwise, through time and chance’ (Rengger 2002: 353). Indeed, even if the ‘tsar breaks his word he does so with yet more words’ (Heathershaw 2009: 10); so action, in the public sphere, is never inconsequential, as all politicians have to deal with public credibility. For these reasons, rhetoric, public roles and their repercussions can themselves be objects of inquiry, irrespective of the actual intent.

The main thesis

Overall, the goal herein is not to dispute that there is a geopolitical context for each of President Karimov’s external relationships, nor that rapprochement with Russia or the United States existed in certain periods, rather dismiss alignment interpretations and show how Uzbekistan’s bilateral relationships result from political interaction evolving through time. More specifically, the aim is to demonstrate that Uzbekistani leadership insists publicly on self-reliance - a type of political autonomy that is not simply reduced to the exogenous rationale of playing one against the other. (In)stability in bilateral relationships derives from periods of particular (in)compatibility in roles. These result from (in)coherency in public interaction and not from a particular calculating or tactical mindset. Once adopting this hypothesis, Tashkent is no longer taken to be aligning itself with any particular state for either financial gain or security, thereby

⁸ Intentions cannot obviously be ignored if the goal is to determine accountability, explain frustration, deception and resentment.

mitigating the problem of inferring preferences for such an opaque regime. Periods of cooperation, instead, depend on how a process of public interaction evolved through time; shaped, in part, by Tashkent's commitment to self-reliance. So, the way in which Uzbekistan's bilateral relationships progress depends on two alternative hypotheses:

- Uzbekistani leadership developed roles in the public sphere pertaining to political self-reliance, which shape and give meaning to its actions;
- Bilateral relationships can be explained as a political process, in which the roles of Uzbekistani leadership and those with whom it interacts shape action in the public sphere, thus leading to conflict and cooperation.

This thesis is organized around those two pillars. Chapter I starts by reviewing the literature on Uzbekistani foreign policy and the focus on geopolitical balancing; explicating then what is meant by self-reliance as a typology of strict autonomy and political independence. Afterwards, Chapter II delves into the framework of the thesis, elucidating all the key concepts in detail, namely the notions of role, narrative, action, public sphere and public credibility. Chapter III builds on the former two chapters and looks into rhetoric to infer the self-reliant roles propounded by Uzbekistani leadership from 1989 to 2010. It evaluates whether the role set was relatively consistent and also the contexts that led to its public prominence. Lastly, Chapters IV through VII propose four distinct narratives for each of Tashkent's relationships with the governments of the United States, Russia, Germany and Turkey. It is worth clarifying why the thesis focuses on those four cases. The first two deal with Tashkent's bilateral interaction with the 'great powers', namely Russia and the United States, which are the usual targets of scholarly accounts (see Chapter I for how Uzbekistan's relations have been described). Hence, these two narratives shed another light onto those relations, less focused on geopolitical calculation than on highlighting their specific dynamics and public interaction. On the other hand, a section focused on Germany - an important middle power - shows that some consistent cooperation with Tashkent is possible and that not all of relationships in the international public sphere need be conflicting. It is thus an important control-case, seeing as Germany was one of Uzbekistan's main import partners in the 1990s,⁹ and the only foreign actor to maintain a military base in the country after the Andijan crisis of 2005. This account will hopefully demonstrate that cooperation depends on compatibility in roles arising through time. Lastly, Tashkent's

⁹ See Uzbekistan's main trade partners in 'Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2011' *Asian Development Bank*, available via <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/KI/2011/pdf/AFG.pdf>, accessed July 2012.

relationship with Turkey's government somewhat controls the middle power influence of Germany, thereby showing that conflicting interaction can arise with any other country and not just with the 'great powers'. This, then, is a way of observing how conflict comes about. If the narrative conforms to the core hypotheses, Tashkent's conflicting relationship with Ankara, like with Washington and Moscow, was more a product of growing role incompatibility than of preconceived rational calculation or strategic balancing.

Lastly, the conclusion discusses whether focusing on public interaction reveals anything different and so revisits the question of whether balancing is just as useful for explaining Uzbekistani relations. In any case, a cautionary note is required, seeing as this thesis does not seek to become a definitive explanation of all events. On the contrary, this work takes as its main premise that the intrinsic preferences of the regime are highly secluded and so focuses only on public politics and interaction.

I. Self-Reliance: The Complex External Relations of Uzbekistan's regime from 1991 to 2010

Uzbekistan has the largest population of the former Soviet Central Asian Republics and is one of the only double landlocked countries in the world.¹⁰ Stable leadership since independence in 1991, in addition to its size and location, means that Tashkent has a substantial role to play in Central Asia. It is therefore important to characterize how some scholars portray Uzbekistan's complex external relations and its tussles with the 'great powers', namely Russia and the United States, and how self-reliance may be an appropriate way of depicting its international engagement.

A number of works on Central Asian politics refer either to the systemic importance of Uzbekistan or to the influence of its domestic environment on foreign policy (e.g. Cooley 2012; Allison 2008, 2004; Allison 2001; Blank 2005; Deyermond 2009; Lewis 2008; Kazemi 2003). These two distinct points of view disclose different characteristics: the geopolitical level reveals how local securitization is part of a wider regional context (Buzan and Waever 2003: 44) and a domestic focus, like studying Uzbekistani leadership (e.g. Kazemi 2003), locates the origins of Tashkent's foreign policy decision-making.

Looking into the regional or domestic level, though, is not the goal herein. Instead, the lens is focused at the bilateral state level in order to downplay a bit of the systemic context and show how each relationship has its own independent dynamic. This may come at the cost of greater methodological complexity (Singer 1969: 27-28) but, as Waltz (1990) would argue, explaining foreign policy is not analogous to studying systemic politics.

The purpose of this Chapter is to look into works concentrating solely on Uzbekistani foreign policy and international relations, namely those of Fumagalli (2007a), Aneschi (2010), Akbarzadeh (2005), Spechler and Spechler (2010, 2009), Melvin (2000), Bohr (1998) and Hale (1994). These contributions are then split into those that *focus on Uzbekistan's regime survival and alignment* (I.1) and others that *look at bilateral relationships independently* (I.2) - a division that purposefully brings into light some of the points made in the Introduction. Each work will be analyzed separately, since many contain different assumptions that need to be contextualized appropriately. It is also worth noting that some criticisms may appear pedantic in that they concentrate on wordings/definitions; yet, subtle distinctions do influence how

¹⁰ Double land-locked means that goods and people have to cross two political borders before reaching the sea. Liechtenstein is the other double land-locked country in the world.

each relationship is depicted and therewith play a role in reproducing the idea of inconsistency in Uzbekistani policy making that this thesis aims to counter.

I.1. The Focus on Uzbekistan's regime survival and alignment

Matteo Fumagalli's (2007a) article 'Alignments and Realignments in Central Asia' is a suitable way of opening the discussion since it is an excellent parsimonious application of a balancing paradigm. The scholar applies Steven David's (1991) omnibalancing theory to 'understand the rationale of Uzbekistan's rapprochement with Russia, look at the implications thereof, and locate this discussion within the theoretical debates on international realignments' (Fumagalli 2007a: 254). The article makes a number of important inferences regarding the relationship between Russia and Uzbekistan: the existence of a deteriorating political relationship during the 1990s followed by revived interest in the energy sector; President Putin as the main instigator of rapprochement, leading to an improving relationship after 2000; President Karimov's goals of maintaining autonomy in the international arena; and scepticism toward Russian encroachment (Fumagalli 2007a: 255-256; 261-262).

The inferences listed above suggest the existence of an unstable bilateral relationship between the Russian and Uzbekistani governments that does not depend necessarily on surrounding context or even Washington's interests. However, the author then portrays Tashkent's rapprochement with Moscow as a result of increased 'normative competition' with the United States (Ibid: 254; 264), even though he recognizes that the relationship between Russia and Uzbekistan had been improving after 2000, following President Putin's new approach of good-will toward Central Asia (Ibid: 261-262).

Evidently, the relationship between Moscow and Tashkent cannot ignore surrounding factors, such as the Colour Revolutions, as the author pointedly explicates (Ibid: 257). Still, balancing as an analytical tool derives from a number of underlying assumptions regarding the preferences of Uzbekistan's leadership. As concerns intrinsic motivation, the article argues for the need to understand Uzbekistani foreign policy-making (Ibid: 254). Yet, instead of concentrating on internal politics (a complicated endeavour given Tashkent's obsession with secrecy), the author proposes a number of exogenous preferences by inferring 'underlying continuity in the driving forces behind Uzbekistan's international alignments, namely, regime survival' (Ibid: 261), and Tashkent playing 'various powers against each other in order to retain political autonomy' (Ibid: 256).

Notwithstanding their apparent validity, the assumptions are far from being satisfactory. For example, if regime survival was indeed the main goal of President Karimov's government, why then would it have to play one against the other? Could it not simply retreat from the public sphere, as did Turkmenistan throughout the late 1990s? In fact, one could argue that all leaders of Central Asian Republics aim at survival, except that this does not show why their international relationships differed. So, the model applied by Fumagalli (2007a) already takes as its core premise that strategic balancing is the more rational strategy, thereby begging the question of (re)alignment. In other words, focusing on balancing implies that Tashkent was at some point aligned with either Washington or Moscow.

According to Steven David's (1991: 234) model, alignment 'occurs when a state brings its policies into close cooperation with another state in order to achieve security goals.' The definition is broad yet straightforward in calling for 'close cooperation'. So, at a first glance, applying David's (1991) model offers a seemingly convincing picture of Tashkent's actions from 2000 to 2006. However, it cannot be extended to the 1990s, since evidence suggests that the relationship with both powers was equally unstable at the time.¹¹ In any case, if it was just after 2001 that Uzbekistan's government aligned with Washington, one has to take into account the empirical evidence. Negotiations for Tashkent leasing K-2 to Washington were difficult (see Chapter V) and the 2002 'Strategic Partnership Agreement', signed between both parties, is hardly proof of alignment. The document was more a list of reforms than a 'strategic' security document: only a number of bilateral consultations were proposed and no American security commitments were guaranteed (only a reference to 'grave concern' was indicated, in the case Uzbekistan were attacked, as well some clauses for providing military equipment, which Washington had already started supplying since 2000).¹² Actually, Tashkent signing international agreements is not evidence of alignment. Already, in 1994 and 1998, Moscow and Tashkent signed agreements on joint strategic and economic cooperation, yet no close cooperation came about. Indeed, Fumagalli (2007a: 244) actually described this as the period Tashkent 'decisively undertook a progressive distancing from Russia.' Fumagalli (2007a: 264) also recognized that Uzbekistani leadership was reluctant in conceding to Russia even after it joined the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in 2006. In fact, there is no evidence that the two countries ever closely cooperated within CSTO. So, bearing in mind these

¹¹ Matteo Fumagalli (2007a) admits that the relationship with Moscow was not strong in the 1990s. Moreover, the relationship with Washington only began improving significantly after 1998, once the American Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were attacked by Al Qaida.

¹² See 'Declaration on the Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Framework Between the United States of America and the Republic of Uzbekistan' March 2002, available via, <http://www.fas.org/terrorism/at/docs/2002/US-UzbekPartnership.htm>, accessed: September 2010.

events, how is it then possible to conclude that alignment was a feature of Uzbekistani interaction?

In sum, (re)alignment is not equivalent to rapprochement, i.e. improving relations. Instead, autonomy seems to have been the underlying motif and Fumagalli (2007: 256) was aware that President Karimov hoped for 'retaining political autonomy and stability in order to avoid entrapment'. The relationship between Tashkent and Moscow certainly improved after 2000, but this is not a *sine qua non* condition for realignment or strategic balancing against Washington. There is, therefore, much more than security to the relationship between Russia and Uzbekistan, as Fumagalli (2007a: 261) also recognized.

Luca Aneschi's (2010) analysis of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan's foreign policies has a number of similarities. Like Fumagalli (2007a), the author offers very insightful explanations of the interconnection between domestic concerns and foreign policy-making and demonstrates how both regimes took special steps to ensure total control of foreign policy (Aneschi 2010: 145). As such, the article portrays convincingly how building foreign relations is a significant prestige and nation-building tool: 'Turkmen and Uzbek nation builders selected analogous strategies in their propagandistic exploitation of foreign policy and, at the same time, adopted parallel discourses in support of such propaganda' (Ibid: 146). In the case of Uzbekistan, the scholar shows how the regime's top-down hierarchy instrumentalized Amir Timur (Tamerlane) as one of the originators of Uzbekistani foreign policy and how President Karimov frequently portrayed himself as an innovator in the field (Ibid: 147). The article offers thus an important perspective on how foreign policy was a source prestige, particularly as a 'drive for internal legitimacy' (Ibid: 146).

Nevertheless, one of the main problems lies in the way it connects foreign policy decisions to the long-term goals of the regime. The scholar recognizes that in Uzbekistan, like in Turkmenistan, 'leaderships considered both excessive dependence on external power and international isolation as detrimental to their political survival' (Ibid: 144). The difficulty lies precisely in this last point, i.e. in equating their worldviews with 'regime survival' - very much like Fumagalli's discussion (2007a). Aneschi (2010: 146) argues explicitly that 'regime maintenance and regime survival became therefore central to Turkmen and Uzbek foreign policy making and wielded equal influence on declaratory and operational foreign policy, which the regimes constantly manipulated to consolidate their internal power.' Thereupon, he argues that 'both regimes made frequent reference to vaguely framed declaratory statements to justify elastic operational foreign policies, in which (...) sudden shifts and constant realignments featured regularly' (Ibid: 148). Naturally a question comes to mind: what

kind of political establishment does also not manipulate for the sake of manoeuvrability? Michael Denison (2009: 429) too contested this point in his review of Aneschi's (2009) book on Turkmen foreign policy: 'given that diplomacy is, more often than not, a dirty game of compromise and backroom deals, this dissonance could be applied to virtually any state.'

Besides over-extending the argument of manipulative foreign policy, Aneschi (2010), much like in the case of Fumagalli (2007a), deduces regime survival to be the key decision-making factor. To show then how foreign policy was instrumentalized for that purpose, Aneschi (2010: 149-153) discusses Uzbekistan's relationships with two major powers, namely the United States and Russia.¹³ This choice spawns from the author's aim of focusing on the 'complex linkage connecting regime survival and *sudden shifts* in the relationship between Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and the Great Powers' (Ibid: 144).¹⁴ The latter statement, however, is not fully accurate because, as Fumagalli (2007a) recognized, Tashkent's rapprochement with Moscow was not sudden, but gradual. As such, when the article argues that 'in the early Putin era, Uzbek foreign policy continued to pursue disengagement from Russia' (Ibid: 150), this deduction is not precise, especially because Aneschi (2010: 155) justifies it with the fact that a Strategic Partnership was signed between Washington and Tashkent. As aforementioned, for Uzbekistan's regime, signing an agreement is not evidence of alignment. Indeed, the inference is even more perplexing in Aneschi's (2010) case because he argues that Tashkent's declarations do not often match operational policy (see above). Moreover, the argument assumes implicitly that Tashkent cannot be improving relations with both powers at the same time.

While Aneschi (2010) recognizes that an improved relationship with Washington was certainly important to the prestige of the regime, he ignores that Tashkent was focused on control and that increased public spotlight was not entirely compatible with internal stability. Hence, the relationship with Washington was never without friction, unlike the succinct picture portrayed in the article. John Heathershaw (2007: 137), for example, argues that the 'partnership' with the United States was 'always an illusion in that it was built on wishful representations of each other and what the partnership did and did not entail. While at first these contrasts lead to a formal vagueness and a constructive ambiguity, this ambiguity became unsustainable as the playing out of events made the differences more acute and brought them into conflict.'

Shahram Akbarzadeh's (2005) book, *Uzbekistan and the United States: Authoritarianism, Islamism and Washington's Security Agenda*, offers an excellent

¹³ The first problem comes from the choice of focusing just on these two states. Suffice to say, great powers cannot be ignored, but what about other relevant actors such as Germany, Turkey or even China?

¹⁴ Italics added.

compilation of some of the main issue-areas affecting Uzbekistani foreign policy. Akbarzadeh's (2005) work does more than the title suggests as he also pays great attention to Tashkent's relationship with Moscow. The overall thesis of the book is that President Karimov's regime sought mainly to fight against Islamism and strengthen itself against Moscow, but that these goals 'did not always coincide and seldom allowed Uzbekistan to follow a consistent foreign policy (...) and that the United States offered the best chance of pursuing goals in tandem' (Akbarzadeh 2005: 3). In order to develop the argument, the book is divided into seven chapters, in which only the fourth and fifth focus specifically on Uzbekistani-American relations. The Chapters are rich in information and depict quite consistently Uzbekistani overtures toward Washington and the latter's initial reluctance to engage with Tashkent (Ibid: 61-75). The story also shows the effects of policy debates by demonstrating how some of Washington's internal discussions affected the Russian press (Ibid: 78-81).

While the work is incredibly coherent, it is still important to question Akbarzadeh's (2005) thesis, i.e. Tashkent's focus on curbing Islam and Russian influence, and how this resulted in inconsistency. For one, the scholar argues that 'the Uzbek regime's relations with Islam followed a complex and contradictory course' (Ibid: 24). It is important to bear in mind that inconsistency in foreign policy was not defined in Akbarzadeh's (2005) book. So, if the scholar means that Tashkent entering and exiting international organizations is a sign of inconsistent behaviour, then what could be said about American and Russian foreign policies during the same period? Moscow distanced itself from the region and only regained interest gradually in the late 1990s. Washington also paid little attention to Central Asia and only later became interested in the region's natural resources and security situation. The author recognizes this, so how can Tashkent's policies be regarded as inconsistent if its own counterparts were also changing their perspectives of the region? Either all were inconsistent or no such consistency can be surmised without first acknowledging whether Tashkent's intention changed. The book actually argues quite persuasively that Uzbekistani leadership hoped to lure the United States to the region and therefore supported all of Washington's positions in the United Nations (Ibid: 57-61). Is this then not a sign of consistency?

Another problem lies in the depiction of Tashkent wanting to distance itself from Moscow, which makes subsequent analysis *ad hoc*. For instance, when describing Uzbekistan's accession to the Collective Security Treaty (CST), which could contradict that premise, Akbarzadeh (2005: 46) justifies the decision as a sort of last resort: 'at the time, Tashkent felt it necessary to join the only power available in order to protect itself.' It is unclear, however, from what Tashkent needed to protect itself. He states

that it was a response to Tajikistan's Civil War, but this might be overstressing the case. The CST was endorsed in Tashkent in May 1992 before conflict in Tajikistan became rampant. Instead, the decision to join the CST was part of ongoing negotiations pertaining to the future of the ruble zone and the Commonwealth of Independent States (see Chapters III and IV).¹⁵

The analytical predicament persists throughout the book: 'in 1999 Uzbekistan was still looking for allies to combat Islamic insurgency as well as counter Russia's encroachment into Central Asia' (Ibid: 48). The United States is thus portrayed as the counterpart to Russia and Akbarzadeh (2005: 61) deliberates among other examples that 'Uzbekistan's pro-NATO orientation was made public in 1994, when it joined the outer periphery of NATO by signing up for NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme.' However, all other Central Asian states joined PfP (even Turkmenistan), and Uzbekistani forces, like those of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, also participated in the CENTRASBAT military exercises that were partially coordinated by the Pentagon. As such, within the Central Asian context, Uzbekistan joining PfP is not surprising. Regarding accession to the Georgia-Ukraine-Azerbaijan-Moldova organization (GUAM), Akbarzadeh (2005: 48) argues that it was designed to counteract Russia. However, it is important to take into account that joining GUAM is also consistent with economic policy. At the time, GUAM was regarded as the best means of implementing the *Silk Road* initiative, which proposed new trade routes for the region.

So, instead of suggesting that Uzbekistani foreign policy was driven by two somewhat contradictory exogenous goals - fighting Islamism and disentangling from Russia -, it is better to frame it in a more general way, based on preserving general autonomy, as mentioned briefly by Aneschi (2010) and Fumagalli (2007a). In sum, it is not entirely accurate to portray Tashkent's involvement in Tajikistan as driven by concerns over Islamism, especially because Akbarzadeh (2005: 7-23; 50) concedes that internal control and prestige were also important to President Karimov's authoritarianism.

I.2. Looking at bilateral relationships independently

Martin Spechler and Dina Spechler's (2009) article 'Uzbekistan among the Great Powers' is one of the most thorough accounts of Uzbekistani foreign relations. Rather than adopting a balancing paradigm, their work describes the relations between Tashkent and the 'great powers' (Russia and the United States) by focusing on each of

¹⁵ Whilst President Karimov did indeed voice his demand for non-interventionism, he also prioritized being part of a loose confederation supported by Moscow. It is perhaps herein that lays the contradiction and not in distancing Uzbekistan from Russia. See Chapter IV.

their particular internal dynamics. To begin at the end of their article, the two scholars surmise that ‘considering its objectives - assuring independent development and regime stability - Uzbekistan’s foreign policy must be considered a success’ (Spechler & Spechler 2009: 371). Unlike the other works above, their understanding of Uzbekistani relations downplays regime survival and, like Gleason’s (2003; 2001: 177-179) work on Central Asian economies, focuses on the ideological conceptions of President Karimov’s regime. Accordingly, Spechler and Spechler (2009: 353) argue that as ‘one of the larger successor states of the former Soviet Union, the Republic of Uzbekistan has been especially concerned in its foreign relations to retain the new country’s independence - political, economic, and military.’ Additionally, the article highlights that ‘outside observers have little way of determining how Uzbekistan’s foreign policy is made’ (Ibid: 351).¹⁶

Spechler and Spechler (2009: 354) then posit ‘three main periods of the country’s external orientation: (1) from 1991 to 1999, characterized by delinking from Russia and a search for alternatives, (2) 1999-2003/5, a time of reliance on NATO and the USA, and (3) 2003/5-2008, years in which there has been a return to closer economic and political cooperation with the Russian Federation, as well as with the People’s Republic of China’. The two scholars explain that the ‘break with the USA resulted from accumulated dissatisfaction on the Uzbek side, together with a change in American needs and priorities, as well as Russian reengagement. It was not a sudden change’ (Ibid: 368). This inference seems analogous to the other works above. However, the differences are actually substantial. The two authors focus on a combination of factors - namely gradual disappointment, Russian engagement and American dissatisfaction - to explain why relations with Washington deteriorated. It thus underlines (in)compatibility between *both sides* and not just Tashkent’s supposed exogenous wish to balance or survive.

Even though Spechler and Spechler’s (2009) portrayal offers a more comprehensive take on nearly twenty years of Uzbekistani foreign policy, a number of points remain unclear. For one, given that the article focuses on the two great powers, more evidence is necessary. For instance, no account is provided of American involvement before 1999 and, if there was none (which is not the case), no justification is proposed. Moreover, Spechler and Spechler (2009: 364) are too succinct in their analysis of the Russian-Uzbekistani relationship in the early 1990s, arguing that ‘in short, Uzbekistan saw little benefit, and some threat, from its long-time association

¹⁶ The article then describes some geographical characteristics of the country, its economic capabilities, military power and some of its main policy conceptions, such as territoriality. The latter is one of Uzbekistan’s main policies for the region; a pillar that is amply described in Fumagalli’s (2007b) excellent article on Uzbekistani multi-ethnic politics.

with Russia and cautiously withdrew.’ The story though is more complex and little if nothing is mentioned of the problem of Soviet debt, the ruble (issues which Hale (1994) highlights) and the disagreements between President Karimov and Moscow’s reformists and nationalists.

It is also unclear why the article posits that ‘Uzbekistan has switched its primary foreign orientation several times since 1991, though always reserving its freedom of maneuver’ (Ibid: 353). Actually, the narratives presented by the two authors show that Tashkent’s relationships with Washington and Moscow had their highs and lows. However, if they both argue that ‘freedom to manoeuvre’ and ‘independence’ are the underlying goals of President Karimov’s foreign policy, how then could Uzbekistani orientation have altered? Perhaps engaging with literature on foreign policy change would have offered insight. According to Charles Hermann (1990: 5-6), an international orientation change is the most ‘extreme foreign policy change,’ which consists of an actor shifting its ‘international role and activities.’ So, while Spechler and Spechler (2009) do propound convincingly that Tashkent’s relationships with Washington and Moscow were far from being static, adjustments are not necessarily a case of orientation change. Following their line of argument, if Tashkent’s aim was seeking independence, the end did not change but only the means. Assuming, though, that orientation did alter, on which basis then could the authors conclude that Uzbekistani foreign policy was successful?

In addition to the problem of orientation, by also summarizing that policy tilted from one to another, the authors imply that it was mostly Tashkent’s decision to improve relations. This, however, is not entirely consistent with the story that was presented. As indicated above, the discussion in the article evinces that relationships changed not just because of President Karimov’s decision-making, but also due to how the great powers positioned themselves in the region. In fact, the article argues that President Putin’s decision to engage more with Central Asia after 2000 was a key reason (Ibid: 367).

Martin Spechler & Dina Spechler’s (2010) other article extends some of their first conclusions. Its title, ‘Foreign Policy of Uzbekistan: Sources, Objectives and Outcomes’, suggests a more general discussion on Uzbekistani foreign policy, as compared to its 2009 counterpart. The article, however, fails to deliver a comprehensive analysis on foreign policy, offering a very brief account of Uzbekistani relations with other crucial actors. An important state like Turkey is entirely neglected. Germany too is not mentioned (with the exception of a succinct allusion to a speech

made by President Karimov).¹⁷ Evidently, Uzbekistani-German and Uzbekistani-Korean relations are not as eventful as the apparent competition between Washington and Moscow, but neglecting them leaves the story entirely incomplete.

Moving to Annette Bohr's (1998) monograph on Uzbekistani politics and foreign policy, the complexities of the first years of President Karimov's regime are brilliantly detailed. Bohr (1998: 43) argues that Uzbekistan's foreign policy 'has focused on strengthening national independence, attracting direct investment and building political and economic ties with partners in both the West and East.' This is perhaps one of the best summaries of President Karimov's aims. Unlike other works (see above), no mention is made of Tashkent deliberately playing one against the other and purposively aiming to deter Moscow. In fact, the author concludes that 'while aware that a good relationship with Russia is crucial for stability, Uzbekistan's leadership is conscious of the dangers that deeper integration poses to its freedom of action' (Bohr 1998: 68).

Bohr (1998: 44-65) explains some of Tashkent's main relationships, namely with the CIS, ECO, Central Asian Republics, Russia and some non-CIS members. This focus on bilateralism seems appropriate since President Karimov tended to neglect multilateralism from the start (see Chapter IV). Bohr (1998: 61) then offers an account of the problems affecting cooperation: 'in recent years [the mid 1990s] Uzbekistan has been reorienting its economy toward the industrialized West, in the process relegating its traditional partner [Russia] to a secondary role.' This account again seems to suggest that the purpose was not to relinquish Moscow; rather the relationship deteriorated because Russia was not the only partner Tashkent sought to embrace. Moreover, the text then develops the point that the relationship was not stable because Moscow too remained distant (Ibid: 61-2). Uzbekistan's government is also compared to Ukraine's and described as 'the southern pole of resistance to Russian efforts to exert undue influence on CIS member states. Indeed, President Karimov's disillusionment with the CIS appears to have grown with each attempt by Russia to entrench its position as the organization's hegemon' (Ibid: 44). So, a key factor in explaining the relationship is not necessarily the goal to separate from Moscow. Relations, instead, deteriorated because of Moscow's status as *primus inter pares*.

As for other interactions, the narratives are shorter, but demonstrate how Uzbekistan's regime was not wholeheartedly convinced of the approaches adopted by

¹⁷ This is surprising, given that Berlin is the only foreign actor that has a military base in Uzbekistan. Also, the article focuses significantly on the economic dimension and, on that regard, Germany was one of Uzbekistan's main import partners (by far the largest from Europe) throughout the period. For the same reason, more insight should have been provided on South Korea as a state with a large stake in Uzbekistan's economy - beyond some small factual examples provided in the text and in two footnotes (see Spechler & Spechler 2010: 162; 165; 166).

both Turkey and Iran (Ibid: 61-65). Little though is mentioned of actors that invested significantly in Uzbekistan.¹⁸ Regarding the United States, Bohr (1998: 65; 63) deliberates that 'Uzbekistani-US relations, however, have not always been cordial' yet that it was Washington being 'uneasy with Russia's preponderant influence in the former Soviet south, in 1995, that altered its assessment of Uzbekistan.' What is insightful about this analysis is that it downplays Uzbekistani interests and, alternatively, highlights Washington's changing perception of the Central Asian Republic. In other words, Bohr (1998: 63-65) suggests that the dynamic is gradual and not simply a predetermined result of Tashkent's wish to engage with Washington as a response to Russia. Disappointment, quarrels and different worldviews gradually shaped each of the relationships and not a deliberate strategy taken from the start.

Perhaps the only negative issue with Bohr's (1998) account is that while it suggests that there is a political dynamic, it does not show how these issues manifested themselves publicly and affected action. At any rate, it is unjust to criticize Bohr (1998), and also Melvin (2000) (see below), for not focusing on these processes, given that their works are largely monographs, attempting to trace Uzbekistani foreign policy, and therefore less concerned with showing how events were shaped by public interaction.

Like Bohr's (1998) work, Neil Melvin's (2000) discussion of Uzbekistani relations with the outside world is also a comprehensive analysis. Melvin (2000: 89-118) focuses on the changing mindset of President Karimov and recognizes the difficulty of fully understanding Uzbekistani foreign policy: 'since independence, a complex set of interrelated factors has affected Uzbekistani external policy. Frequently these factors *appear* contradictory and cause problems for developing foreign policy' (Melvin 2000: 90).¹⁹ The book then sketches Uzbekistani relations with a diverse set of important actors and organizations, namely Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Russia, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, India, the United States, the CIS, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the Central Asian Union (CAU).

Thereafter, the author foreshadows Spechler and Spechler's (2010, 2009) inference (see above): 'external relations can be viewed as the most successful sphere of policy developed by President Karimov since independence. Uzbekistan has been able to develop its main aim of building links to western industrial countries, particularly the United States, while still maintaining a wide variety of relations necessary to manage critical regional issues' (Ibid: 114).

In his subsequent account of Uzbekistani policies toward Russia, the United States and Turkey, the author looks at each bilateral relationship separately. As

¹⁸ Annette Bohr (1998: 63) identifies them as South Korea, Japan, Germany, France, Britain and Indonesia.

¹⁹ Italics added.

concerns Russia, Melvin (2000: 100) begins by arguing that ‘as the former colonial power in Central Asia, the Russian Federation’s relationship to Uzbekistan has often been difficult (...) a central aim of Uzbek policy has been to reduce the role of the Russian Federation in Central Asia.’ He shows, in addition, that this goal was not clear-cut and ‘that Uzbekistan initially adopted a cautiously positive relationship to Russia and Russian inspired institutions such as the CIS’ (Ibid: 100). He more or less shows that the relationship deteriorated as *both sides* became engaged in a number of disputes over the Duma’s reformist and nationalist policies, the civil war in Tajikistan and international equality (Ibid: 101).

As for interaction with Turkey, Melvin (2000: 104-5) propounds that the relationship did not fully blossom after a promising start, mainly due to President Karimov’s reluctance in indulging with Ankara’s ‘big brother’ type of schemes and the growing influence of Turkish Islamism (Ibid: 104-5). Lastly, a very succinct account of Tashkent’s relationship with Washington is offered, whereby the author demonstrates that friction over President Karimov’s authoritarianism prevented mutual cooperation. Melvin (2000: 108-9) then suggests that the latter’s growing reliability paid off since Washington become less reluctant to engage with Tashkent.

Lastly, Melvin (2000: 114) argues in one conclusion that ‘Uzbekistan’s ties have been characterized by frequent reorientations reflecting the contradictory interests that have informed Uzbekistani foreign policy’. This is misleading for the same reasons discussed for the authors above. As concerns contradictory interests, this is possible, but Melvin (2000) gives little insight into what they might be beyond the wish to hamper Moscow’s influence in Tajikistan. With regard to ‘frequent reorientations’, it is unclear what the author means, since the only change in orientation that was indicated in his work was Tashkent’s growing disillusionment with the CIS and Russia’s role within it. As for relations with Turkey and ECO members, Melvin’s (2000: 105-107; 113-114) account does not show a shift, rather hesitant relationships that never consolidated.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning Henry Hale’s (1994) early work on Uzbekistan’s foreign policy orientation. Hale (1994) defines orientation as ‘the degree to which a particular state is willing to constrain its own decision-making autonomy through its association with another state or group of states as indicated by political and economic pacts and other mutual economic ties that some other states actively promote with other states’ (Hale 1994: 139). Hale (1994: 136) then identifies three forces guiding Uzbekistani orientation, namely its proximity to Russia, and both Islamic and Turkic values. The scholar also recognizes the importance of rhetoric and the insistence of leadership in defending its own interests (Ibid: 143). Since Uzbekistan had only

recently become independent, its foreign policy was still consolidating itself, but Hale (1994) manages to illustrate how difficult it is to describe Tashkent's relationships with Turkey, Iran, Russia and the United States. Based on the lack of American interest for the region and Tashkent's scepticism toward Iranian politics and Turkey's economic power, he concludes that Uzbekistan's regime would either be tied with Russia or become a neutral actor in the region (Ibid: 164).

I.3. Summary of the main challenges and positing 'Self-Reliance' as the main predicate for action

All the above authors offer different insights into several features of Uzbekistani foreign policy. A number of challenges were also indicated that are perhaps appropriate to recall and summarize:

- Focusing solely on the United States and Russia is misleading since it pushes inquiry toward the idea of inconsistency and (re)alignment, thus ignoring other important relationships that may contest that generalization;
- Adopting a balancing paradigm means that a whole process of interaction tends to be ignored;
- It is important to look into each bilateral relationship from the beginning and consider how the manner in which it evolved resulted from a specific publicly contested process of interaction that evolved though time;
- Assuming strict exogenous regime preferences brings upon a number of problems in explaining the nature of relationships and how they evolved, especially because they cannot be extended to all periods;
- Exogenous preferences that determine intent also lead analysis toward a portrayal of shifting orientations and inconsistency, rather than seeing such changes as a coherent way of asserting self-reliance;
- If self-reliance is regarded as the main predicate for action, it is easier to acknowledge that Tashkent has never actually aligned itself, i.e. it did not cooperate closely with any other state.

Before delving into the conceptual framework (Chapter II), it is appropriate to clarify what is meant by the core notion of self-reliance. As indicated above, most authors either tacitly or explicitly agree that Tashkent endorses a vision of political independence that has real effects in its external relations - norms that are, in fact, amply advertised by President Karimov's regime.²⁰

²⁰ Besides President Karimov's frequent public statements concerning foreign policy and international politics, many of his worldviews were articulated in a number of books. For English accounts, see

I.4. Self-Reliance

To understand the concept of self-reliance, it would be suitable to begin with Wolfgang Piccoli's (1999: 7) excellent summary of Paul Schroeder's (1976) work on alliance formations. The latter argues that states do not necessarily align with another power and that they can instead interact by 'declaring neutrality, whether formal or informal; approaching other states on one or both sides to improve relations, but short of alliance; trying to withdraw into isolation; and conciliating or compromising with the threatening state without capitulating and joining that power in order to keep options open and gain time' (Piccoli 1999). Uzbekistan's external engagement epitomizes the latter inference and many would agree that there is a need to capture Tashkent's stance in the international arena with some kind of typology. For instance, Martin Spechler (2008: 31) argues that Uzbekistan's regime projects an 'independent' stance on regional affairs, but simultaneously rejects 'isolationism'. Similarly, Gregory Gleason (2001: 177) posits that Tashkent follows a 'structuralist' approach that rejects neo-liberal economic policies and emphasizes 'neo-mercantilism.' Stuart Horsman (1999: 45) portrays Tashkent as having an 'autonomous and pragmatist' outlook. Lastly, Elena Mogilevski (2004: 1) refers to Uzbekistan's government fulfilling a 'self-determining' foreign policy. Curiously, some of the concepts can actually be mutually exclusive, depending on the theoretical lens that is taken. For instance, if Uzbekistan's regime is considered neo-mercantilist, some could argue that it is ideological instead of pragmatic.²¹

For reasons that are made clearer below, self-reliance is the most suitable concept for categorizing Uzbekistan's foreign policy predication. Indeed, Gleason (2003: 119) had once indicated that Tashkent endorsed self-reliance as an economic policy. The scholar does not offer a precise definition, although he suggests that it is an alternative to liberalism, focused on self-sufficiency and gradual reform (Gleason 2003: 119).

Perhaps it is useful to look at another interpretation. Self-reliance is the title of Ralph Waldo Emerson's famous essay on individuality. The renowned 19th Century Transcendentalist philosopher argued for men to be declared non-conformists: 'the

Karimov (1992, 1997, 2008). Andrew March (2002, 2003) also offers excellent analysis of President Karimov's works.

²¹ Given that being pragmatic is normally connected with practice rather than theory, using it to compare or even characterize policies is not the best option, insofar as what may be considered practical for some can be cumbersome for others. For instance, protecting an economy might be more logical or practical for a mercantilist, yet highly cumbersome for a liberal. Therefore, for comparison purposes, classifying worldviews as either ideological or pragmatic is highly deceptive and compromised by the bias of the observer.

great man is he who in the midst of the crowd, keeps with perfect sweetness in the independence of solitude' (Emerson 1930: 36). Remaining permanently dissatisfied with current state of affairs is thus regarded as virtuous, since 'discontent is the want of self-reliance' (Ibid: 52). Emerson, though, did not mean to promote seclusion. His purpose was solely to highlight the dangers of 'foolish consistency' and praise scepticism toward society's beliefs and trends. Hence, some of Emerson's assertions on self-reliance may be extrapolated onto international politics. Self-reliant states are essentially sceptical non-conformists, reluctantly committing themselves to the prevalent ideological, institutional, political and economical system:

Self-reliance is a role based on mistrust of foreign penetration and deep scepticism toward the values, institutional arrangements and ideologies of the international public sphere. The role tends to make a regime look inward and depend on its own ideas and capabilities to assure economic performance, preserve authenticity and guarantee manoeuvrability. However, while never committing fully to any ideological paradigm or international organization, the regime does not wholly reject trading or working with international institutions, so long as it does not affect its level of autonomy.

The self-reliance typology derives essentially from the English language, focusing on independence and mitigating dependency, and is therefore a useful way of conceiving Tashkent's stance in the international public sphere. Stating that it is an anglo-saxon term is meant to help generalization, i.e. establish that certain regimes can be described as self-reliant if they follow those criteria, regardless of whether they have actually used an equivalent term in their language or whether their ideologies or public statements can be translated into English as self-reliant.

Lastly, it is important to be aware that self-reliance is not a new typology in scholarly literature. Kal Holsti's (1982: 4) book on foreign policy-restructuring already used the concept of self-reliance - defined as behaviour centred on keeping external economic transactions low; avoiding dependence and commitments which involve dependence or support from other states. Later, Holsti (1995: 87) also described self-reliance as a 'variation of isolationism', whereby states diminish threats through autonomous deterrence. Curiously, Holsti (1982: 4) also differentiates self-reliance from non-alignment, seeing as he considers the latter to be characterized by greater foreign penetration. To better contextualize how the typology might capture a number of similar behaviours in international politics, the following section briefly sketches some potential historical self-reliant states and the origins of their ideas.

1.5. Brief historical sketch of Self-Reliance

Marxism and Liberalism, in spite of their differences, tend to propose political and economic systems that favour universal human progress, independent of any *a priori* constructed social, political or economic traditions (Freeden 1996: 418; 433-434). Karl Marx, for example, besides feeling 'happiness through rebellion' wanted to bring 'enlightenment to humanity' (Priestland 2009: 25). In contrast, approaches located between Liberalism and Marxism can be labelled as 'structuralist' (Spero & Hart 1997: 152-155). Such simplifications are very narrow but, for the sake of comparison, it is best to think of a 'structuralist' paradigm as a loose grouping of ideas that openly contest classical Liberalism and orthodox Marxism. This is controversial, especially because structuralism can also be classified as socialist or 'neo-marxian'.²² Yet, if one bears in mind the broad limitations of such a comparison, self-reliance may be located within the broad structuralist spectrum, opposed to universal progress and mainstream political theories.

Extreme Contestation of Liberalism and Communism: the Fascist Political Economy

The Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and the consolidation of the Soviet Union's power institutionalized the ideological alternative to Liberalism within the international system. Yet, after the turmoil of World War I and the establishment of Communism in the Soviet Union, Fascism soon rejected the those two systems:

When attempting to evaluate classical fascist economic doctrines, it is important to understand classical fascists' aversions to traditional concepts of political economy, due to an in built ideological bias against materialist arguments and an associated hostility towards structural-economist interpretations of events in history. Marxism and socialism are inherently materialistic, embracing the need to have a highly developed understanding and appreciation of the economic side of human existence (...) Liberal beliefs also derive from forms of political economy – a term which emerged in liberal thought in order to explain the 'natural' rise of market based individualism (Baker 2006: 209).

Fascist economies geared themselves for war and emphasized the superiority of rural life, i.e. 'a return to the land and its peasant values', along with an extreme nationalistic overtone in the defence of the nation's own special abilities (Baker 2006: 232-235). In short, fascism hoped to 'transcend both capitalism and socialism' (Ibid: 239). Yet fascist political economy, while similar, does not combine all the prerequisites of self-reliance. The latter entails the pursuit of economic development – authentic to

²² As explained in the remainder of the chapter, many of these very general structuralist approaches were adopted in countries whose governments also considered themselves to be Communist.

each country's overall values and characteristics. Also, self-reliance is not necessarily revisionist, whereas fascism openly endorses aggressiveness and militarism (Ibid: 227; Benjamin 1936).

Chinese Self-Reliance

With the end of World War II and the gradual dissolution of the colonial empires of many western European states, self-reliance became a political and economical slogan in the developing world. The first place to espouse a clearer take on the idea was China. Mao Tse-Tung voiced 'in the late 1950s and early 1960s (...) increasingly assertive nationalism as a response not only to the boycott of China by imperialists, but to Soviet great power chauvinism' (Schram 1991: 67). Mao, facing antagonism from the Soviet Union as well as the disastrous economical consequences of his 1950s 'Great Leap Forward', gradually proposed an alternative. So, in 1962, he announced what was to be considered the Chinese road to socialism:

In the field of heavy industry especially, we copied almost everything from the Soviet Union, and we had very little creativity of our own. At that time it was absolutely necessary to act thus, but at the same time it was also a weakness - a lack of creativity and lack of ability to stand on our own feet. Naturally this could not be our long-term strategy. From 1958 we decided to make *self-reliance* our major policy, and striving for foreign aid a secondary aim (Schram 1991: 59).²³

Marx and Lenin had both argued that the only way to develop Communism in the Far East would be through 'Europeanization', i.e. the adoption of western style institutions and economical practices (Schram 1974: 29). However, by 1965, Mao declared that Marxism 'no longer constitutes a universal and immutable fundamental theory, but merely one more contribution from the West which must be digested and critically made to serve China' (Ibid: 36). Alongside anti-imperialistic rhetoric, Mao developed a new ideology that, whilst still Communist, was no longer orthodox Marxist and certainly not liberal. Chinese *Zi li geng sheng*, which was translated into English as self-reliance, literally means to 'produce even more with one own's strength' (Yahuda 1983: 53). The approach was deeply nationalist and underlined Mao's scepticism toward Moscow and Washington.

Regarding national security, Beijing endorsed a flexibility axiom, known as *quan bian*, based on the traditional Chinese adherence to *realpolitik*. Communist China would not settle with a fixed set of rules to engage with its neighbours and would

²³ Italics added.

simply adopt the strategy that fit its concerns at each particular moment in time (Johnston 1996: 239). In sum, Maoist self-reliance entails ‘an independent outlook, self-conscious creativity and above all the determination to avoid dependence’ by means of ‘retention of the capacity for self-initiative and independent decision-making’ (Yahuda: 52-53).

Self-Reliance as a new Strategy for Economic Development

The Cold War and new global trends, such as self-reliance, would greatly influence intellectuals and post-colonial leaders in Africa and Asia (Macginty & Williams 2009: 10). China had its novel approach as did India when Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru proposed Non-Alignment. Even within the Communist camp, Josip Tito too had pushed for removing Belgrade’s dependency on Moscow.

Throughout the 1960s, the developing world demanded a New International Economic Order (NIEO). As a response, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously declared the development decade (Akinsaya & Davies 1984: 209), since many non-industrialized states felt that the prevailing economic order was no longer able to cope with global challenges. For that reason, reforms to GATT were demanded, as were measures to terminate asymmetrical interdependence (O’Neill 1980: 32).

For a great majority of Third World indigenous thinkers, Africa and Latin America were under neo-colonialist domination (Slvan 1983: 26), thus leading to the inauguration of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1964 (Akinsaya 1984: 210). One of the outcomes of UNCTAD’s Algiers summit in 1973 was the adoption of ‘collective self-reliance’ (Gosovic & Ruggie 1976: 313), which then became an official UN development strategy in 1975;²⁴ targeting the problem of dependency (Biersteker 1980: 230).

By 1980 the term became popular and was the title of Johan Galtung’s new general economic approach. In his edited volume, *Self-Reliance, a Strategy for Development*, Galtung (1980: 12) proclaimed self-reliance to be incompatible with Marxism and Liberalism. Moreover, the paradigm called for ‘authenticity’ and context-specific strategies for development (Mutombo 1980: 111). As such, self-reliance was considered compatible with the rising nationalism of many post-colonial states, by rejecting strict adherence to Western style approaches, although Galtung (1980: 23-27)

²⁴ See Helen O’Neill (1989: 35-35) transcription of the strategy: ‘cooperation (in trade and in industrial and infrastructural planning) between the developing countries themselves needs to be strengthened so that, through a policy of ‘collective self-reliance’, the ‘peripheral’ countries can reduce their excessive dependence on countries of the ‘centre’.

was careful in underlining that self-reliance did not imply isolationism, self-sufficiency nor autarky.

Besides theoretical extrapolations, self-reliance was adopted by several newly independent states throughout the 1960s and 70s. For example, President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania declared in 1967 that his country would pursue its own version of socialism (Bismarck & Cranford 1979: 3-14). Such, practices became commonplace in Africa, as Kenya too engaged with a similar concept designated as *Harimbi* (Mbithi & Rasmusson 1977: 15)

Besides post-colonial countries, some Communist states deviated from Moscow's ideological grip and sought to implement their own specific methods for governance and growth. In 1969, Nicolae Ceausescu delivered a marathon speech in which he propounded a new socialist path based on Romanian national qualities (Priestland 2009: 407]. Similarly, President Enver Hoxha of Albania developed greater ties with Maoist China and officially adopted self-reliance as the regime's slogan (*mbeshtetja ne forcat e veta*) (Backer 1982: 355). Tirana defined self-reliance as an inward policy that, while not rejecting international trade and 'sincere' socialist foreign aid, was aimed at guiding all levels of economy toward greater savings, limited waste, research and development (Turku 2009: 88). Burma too, after the 1962 military coup, adopted a policy known as the *Burmese Way to Socialism* (Aung-Thwin et al 1992). North Korea is another interesting example, mainly because of how it disdained foreign influence and emphasized military expansionism. These norms became part of Kim Il-Sung's *Juche* Idea, which he espoused in 1967 at the People's Supreme Assembly:

The Government of the Republic will implement with all consistency the line of independence, self-sustenance, and self-defense to consolidate the political independence of the country (*chaju*), build up more solidly the foundations of an independent national economy capable of insuring the complete unification, independence, and prosperity of our nation (*charip*) (Lee 2003: 106).

Kim Il-Sung, mistrusting what he considered great power meddling, maintained that he was against *flunkeyism*, i.e. a kind servile to the bigger powers.²⁵ The *Juche* idea, according to Kim Il-Sung, was the only way North Korea could pursue both national independence and socialism (Lee 2003: 106). The new political doctrine insisted on security, fear of aggression and the need for preparing against armed conflict (Turku 2009: 71-77) and was thus both strongly nationalistic and militaristic, with some overtones of fascist political economy.

²⁵ See *Exposition of the Juche Idea* (1983).

Self-reliance, in spite of its different manifestations, is one manner of capturing how Uzbekistan's regime gradually positioned itself in international politics. It is important to be aware though that not all of the actors mentioned above would acknowledge being described by a single typology. Clearly, North Korea's *Juche* idea is not wholly analogous with Tanzania's self-proclaimed self-reliance. Evidently, self-reliance might be translated differently into each language and assume quite distinct connotations. However, for the study herein, it is worth emphasizing again that self-reliance is simply a term in English language that captures key public manifestations favouring defence autonomy, mercantilism, strong economic and financial protectionism, unilateralism, economic development and international equality (see definition above). It is therefore one way of generalizing and comparing similar practices in international politics and, more importantly, understanding how President Karimov gradually positioned himself in the international public sphere.

II. Role Theory: Framework and Methodology

II.1. Focusing on process

Roles are one way of conceptualizing the politics of the public sphere independent of intent. Such an assumption, however, is not to downplay the importance of intent, since the latter is important for understanding instrumental reasoning or cases of manipulation and deception (intent means essentially the purpose of action – see Introduction). Indeed, ‘if speakers said what they meant, then there would be little room for speech act theory and discourse analysis’ (Stubbs 1983: 147). So, social science and humanities delve greatly into the question of intent so as to assess intrinsic preferences and volition.²⁶

While acknowledging the importance of inferring preferences, the following discussion will steer away from fully decoding reasons for political action by simply taking literally what actors say and do. For reasons that are explained below, the core thesis is that cooperation or conflict arises in the public sphere as the roles of different actors clash and become either compatible or contradictory through time.

The hypothesis might suggest that this is a study of (mis)perception seeing as it is based on ideational convergence between distinct actors. Still, studies of perception are intricately connected to intent, since misperception arises when the rationale for the other’s action is incorrectly deduced.²⁷ Roles and their real implications, on the other hand, discount inner motivations and derive from interaction in the public sphere. They are unavoidable and what binds them to political relationships is that once something is advocated in public, that claim has to be legitimated throughout interaction; otherwise the actor gradually loses public credibility.²⁸

²⁶In short, different approaches take a variety of core assumptions regarding the intent of actors which, alongside reasons for action, is usually the building block of many theories. Max Weber (1947: 88-112), for instance, starts the *Theory of Social and Economic Organization* with definitions of sociology and social action where he discusses the problems of interpreting meaningful action that can be overt or purely inward. Standard economic textbooks are more categorical in their premises, assuming that human agents are utility maximizers subject to certain budgetary constraints. Other authors, like Alexander Wendt (1992: 395) would avoid such categorical assumptions and assume that individuals act on the basis of meanings they have toward those objects. Moreover, Paul Ricoeur (1981: 43; 213-214) too begins his discussion of identity by defining hermeneutics as a theory of operation of understanding the nature of intention, action and their meanings.

²⁷For instance, Mary Buckley and Sally Cummings (2001: 3), in their work on perception, argue that the conceptual lens, paradigms or frameworks through which political actors view reality in turn affects their understandings of the behaviour of others and their reactions to it. Hence, a study of perception looks at volition and attempts to understand how the other sees the world. It is therefore slightly inward focused and tries to portray the intrinsic conceptions that one might have toward an object.

²⁸As Michael Brecher et al. (1969: 89) argued, even in the case of dissimulation, decision-makers are likely to be prisoners of their own articulated images since systematic deception leads to credibility problems.

In order to develop these assumptions, the Chapter will begin by developing the idea of narratives and thereafter address the specific methodology for inferring roles. The concept of narrative is framed in section II.2, followed by an explanation of how roles give meaning to action (section II.3). In that section roles will also be differentiated from the widely used concept of personal identity in order to connect the former with the public sphere. This will then allow for separating role from intent and introduce public credibility and its impact in the international public sphere. The last section indicates how roles and narratives are operationalized (II.4).

It is worth mentioning that many of the concepts proposed hitherto are not the product of a singular theory. They in fact incorporate a number of contributions from sociology and international relations. Such an attempt may strike as haphazard, although it should be regarded as a pluralistic endeavour opposed to 'rationalism', i.e. reducing social behaviour to the interplay of exogenously determined preferences.²⁹ Accordingly, the framework is based on the contributions of hermeneutical philosophy, symbolic interactionism and constructivism - namely the works of McCall and Simmons (1966), White (1984), Wendt (1999; 1992), Ricoeur (1992; 1981), Ku (2000), Harnisch (2012; 2011a,b); all of whom focus on issues of identity and processes of social interaction, rather than on mechanistic models of reaction to external stimuli.

Despite the similarities in a number of works it is important to be aware that these contributions are not perfect substitutes. Symbolic interactionism – a theoretical framework spawned from sociology – is not analogous to Ricoeur's hermeneutical philosophy. The latter focuses on issues beyond the sociological such as textual interpretation. For that reason, a brief digression into the current state of role theory is appropriate. This hiatus may then clarify the ontological/epistemological differences between a number of scholars and shed light on how this thesis is situated in the current academic debate.

Brief introduction: Role Theory in International Relations and Social Science

Role theory came to life as a theatrical analogy (Biddle 1986: 68) because, essentially, all actors in a play perform roles. This literary metaphor implies that the theory focuses on 'patterned and characteristic social behaviours, parts or identities that are assumed by social participants, and scripts or expectations for behaviour that are understood by all and adhered to by the performer' (Ibid). Realizing its potential, Kal Holsti (1970)

²⁹ See Wendt (1992: 391-394) for a brilliant discussion on the differences between 'rationalist' and 'constructivist/reflectivist' schools of thought.

was the first scholar to apply role theory in international politics. In his 1970 seminal paper 'National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy', Holsti argued that:

Historians, officials, and theorists of international relations often characterize foreign policy behaviour by terms which suggest patterned or recurring decisions and actions by governments. Typical classifications would include "non-aligned", "bloc leaders", "balancers" and "satellites." When we classify a state as "non-aligned" we imply that in a variety of international contexts and situations, its diplomatic-military actions and decisions will be consistent with the "rules" subsumed under the general category or class of states called "non-aligned" (Holsti 1970: 233).

Building on Holsti's (1970) opening argument, Stephen Walker (1987a: 2) posited that understanding foreign policy through role theory is useful because the latter describes, organizes and explains behaviour. This line of argument derives from the tacit assumption that foreign policy is driven by ideas and shaped by particular expectations (Bengtsson & Elgstrom 2012: 94; Le Prestre 1997a: 4).

A more systematic point in favour of studying roles is that they shape national interests, thus revealing national orientations (e.g. Krotz & Sperling 2011: 214; LePrestre 1997a: 5; Chafetz et al. 1996: 733; Hermann 1987: 125; Wish 1980; Holsti 1970). Another frequently cited benefit is that role theory allows for bridging the gap between agency and structure, given that roles are, on one hand, ideational constructs provided by a particular structure, and, on the other hand, enacted by agents (Breuning 2011: 16). Thereafter, some have even suggested that roles may be applied to all levels of analysis - from actor specific foreign policy to more general international relations (e.g. Walker 1987a,b; Holsti 1970).

While it is important to be aware of the promise of role theory for international relations, its history predates Holsti (1970), as it was developed in the 1950s, 60s and 70s by a number of psychologists and sociologists.³⁰ Much the same as in international relations, role theory did not culminate in one theory, but in a blend of assumptions and approaches (Harnisch 2011a: 7-8; Nabers 2011: 75; Thies 2009: 4).

While, in any case, classifying complex works is never wholly accurate, one may still infer the general assumptions that differentiate a number of scholarly contributions. Accordingly, Dirk Nabers (2011: 4) proposed four general approaches for applying role theory: symbolic interactionism, organizational theory, structuralism and functionalism. Traditional role theorists of international relations were mostly influenced by the latter two, in that they assumed roles to be script based formulae that

³⁰ For a detailed account of the main scholarly contributions of Role Theory to Social Psychology, see Bruce Biddle (1986).

cause action (e.g. Holsti 1970; Wish 1980; Walker 1987c; Shih 1988; Chafetz et al 1996; LePrestre 1997a). For that reason, those scholars were either directly or indirectly influenced by the works of classical functionalist sociologists, like Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton and Neil Gross, who described behaviour as result of either positive or negative reinforcement (McCall & Simmons 1966: 6-7). Additionally, a structuralist-functionalist account tends to focus on ego roles such as relatively stable preferences and beliefs that are taken to be triggers of foreign policy (e.g. Wish 1980, Holsti 1970).

Our concern herein, however, is to avoid the functionalist-structuralist type of analysis and focus mainly on the contributions of symbolic interactionism, whereby action is less diagrammatic and more spontaneous.³¹ This approach is based on the assumption that ‘mechanistic conformity to a role script is observed only in unusual circumstances, as in tightly structured organizations in which roles in this sense are formally defined (...) [Alternatively] individuals involved must somehow *improvise* their roles within very broad limits’ (McCall & Simmons 1966: 7). If roles are conceived in such a strict deterministic manner, it would not be possible to show how meanings change and gradually became contested through time.

Recent scholarship has gradually adhered to the importance of socialization and so avoided some of the structural accounts that were prevalent in role theory’s inception (e.g. Harnisch 2012; Nabers 2011; Thies 2012, 2001).³² This thesis thus proposes that roles provide a kind of conceptual model that gives meaning to action, but nothing more (the concept of meaning to action will be better developed below). Roles cannot wholly predict what will be one’s response to external stimuli; they only contextualize the level of conflict and cooperation evinced in interaction.

II.2. Imposing Narratives: ‘Emplotting’ as Explaining and Understanding Action

Narrative serves to ‘transform a list of historical events that would otherwise be only a chronicle into a story narrative. In order to effect this transformation, the events, agents, and agencies represented in the chronicle must be encoded as “story-elements,” that is to say, characterized as the kinds of events, agents, and agencies’ (White 1984: 20). Consequently a narrative, which is imposed on a particular set of occurrences, is not simply ‘a product of a theory nor as the basis for a method, but rather as a form of

³¹ For an excellent introduction to symbolic interactionism and its connection to Role Theory, see Sheldon Strykerø (1980) book.

³² This criticism has tended to be voiced by European scholars (Thies & Breuning 2012), thereby revealing an Atlantic divide on ontology and epistemology.

discourse which may or may not be used for the representation of historical events' (Ibid: 2).

That said, narratives have multiple purposes in inquiry. On one hand, they may be the object of inquiry, whereby they are subject to interpretation. On the other hand, they are also a means of organizing a particular set of occurrences. This chapter is concerned mainly with the latter use, in that it proposes to *impose* a story on various interlinked incidents. The verb impose, though, has to be read with caution, because the goal is not to recreate one 'true' story, but simply sketch an alternative take on a process of bilateral interaction.

The manner of imposing a narrative is not random and unstructured. Narratives depend on *emplotment*, which provides meaning to a particular set of events and, more importantly, is a particular type of *explanation* (White 1984: 20-21). According to Ricoeur (1992: 143), emplotting 'reverts the effects of contingency, in the sense of what could have happened differently or which might not have happened at all, by incorporating it in some way into the effect of necessity or probability exerted by the configuring act.' Prior to developing the concept of role, however, it is important to clarify how emplotment is a specific type of explanation.

The dialectic of Explanation and Understanding

Present day social science is fixated on Max Weber's apparently irreconcilable dichotomy of explaining (*Erklaren*) and understanding (*Verstehen*) (e.g. Hollis & Smith 1990). This consolidated distinction has, nonetheless, been subject to varying degrees of contestation. Patrick Jackson (2010: 18-23), for example, basing himself on Max Weber, argued that both are in fact not mutually exclusive. His claim presupposes that science depends on the goal and not just the method; and so understanding and explanation are equally 'scientific'. Paul Ricoeur (1981; 1976) offers another interpretation, by positing that explanation and understanding are dialectic, i.e. mutually dependent.

The dialectical interpretation stems from Ricoeur's (1981) ideas regarding interpretation (hermeneutics) and the human sciences as themselves hermeneutical. His analysis is too complex to summarize fully herein, yet it is important to be aware of its key points. According to Ricoeur, explanation is not just causal in the Humean sense, i.e. 'a regular sequence of antecedents and consequences with no inner logical connection between them' (Ricoeur 1981: 218); rather explanation unfolds a number of propositions and meanings, whereas understanding occurs if the whole is built into one synthesizing act (Ricoeur 1981; 1976: 72). Ricoeur (1981: 217) clarifies this point by

comparing his thesis to Levi-Strauss's (1955) structural explanation of the myth. He argues that Levi-Strauss's explanatory study already presupposes an understanding of what is to be a myth, and that his explanation is actually both insufficient and even insipid if left by itself, given that it is only in the act of understanding that the whole is comprehended (Ricoeur 1981: 211).

The dialectical conceptualization reveals that while understanding and explaining are both useful concepts, insisting on their distinction stems from a particular way of conducting science based on Humean causal explanation. Cause, according to Ricoeur (1981: 214), may also be construed as 'an expression, or a phrase, which allows us to consider the action as this or that.' Ricoeur (1981, 1976) therefore is not just criticizing one strict way explaining but also proposing an alternative.

Other authors discussed below would probably agree with Ricoeur's argument. For instance, Alexander Wendt (1999: 165) and both George McCall and Jerry Simmons (1966: 47-48) argue that not all effects are causal in the typical 'scientific sense', rather constitutive or interactive. In light of this, McCall and Simmons (1966: 47-48) stipulate that social (inter)action cannot be conceived as a product of independent objects. Instead, interaction is the combination of equally dependent objects, none of which can be fully isolated to explain the effect. As a result, in some circumstances, it might be best to avoid explaining social action in the strict linear sense posited by Hume.

Explanation through emplotment in a Narrative

In theory, a classic explanation of causes based on antecedent independent conditions is rather straightforward to operationalize. Independent and dependent variables are set, and causal explanations are tested to rule out mere correlation. Given the predominance of that tradition, Ricoeur's conceptualization seems counter-intuitive, but imposing a narrative requires precisely an interweaving between explanation and understanding.

Understanding is disclosed once a set of events is conceived as a whole, much like when one is immersed in reading, inasmuch as each sentence is construed as part of a larger picture. A particular choice of emplotment imposes a choice of story-type, which endows events with meaning (White 1984: 20), whereby the latter refers to a contingent relationship between objects in a narrative (Epstein 2008: 7). This alternative manner of sequencing action should not be regarded as completely idiosyncratic, since, much like scientific explanation, emplotment may also be validated, even though one is tempted to dismiss such a methodology as guesswork.

Hence, the ‘truthfulness’ of a narrative lies in emplotment subscribing to a correspondence criterion:

Not only must the singular existential statements that comprise the “chronicle” of the historical account “correspond” to the events of which they are predications, the narrative as a whole must “correspond” to the general configuration of the sequence of events of which it is an account. Which is to say that the sequence of “facts” *as they are emplotted* in order to make a “story” out of what would otherwise be only a “chronicle,” must correspond to the general configuration of the “events” of which the “facts” are propositional indicators (White 1984: 17-28).

Recognizing that constructing narratives is subject to validation is similar to Jackson’s (2010: 18-23) alternative view of science - that validating a work should be based on the overall assumptions and coherency of the argument, rather than on how it abides by a universal methodology.

II.3. Roles as Predicate-Processes of Action in the Public Sphere

Roles explaining action

Ricoeur (1992: 144), quoting Claude Bremond, defined role as ‘the attribution of some possible, actual, or completed predicate-process to a subject-person.’ McCall and Simmons (1966: 66) also propose a similar conception: ‘a plausible line of action characteristic and expressive of the particular personality that happens to occupy the given position and represents that person’s mode of coming to grips with the general expectations held toward someone in his position.’ These two conceptions of role assume that it *predicates* or shapes action, but not that it necessarily causes it in the Humean sense (see above). So roles can act as a form of emplotment, since they provide meaning to the narrative, shaping and delimiting the scope of action:

In this attribution we see the narrative solution to the problem of ascribing action to an agent (...) The reference in the very definition of “role” (...) situates the role within action dynamics (...) On the basis of this definition of elementary sequence, it becomes possible to draw up a full repertoire of roles, by taking into account a series of enrichments bearing on both the subject-person and the predicate-process (Ricoeur 1992: 144).

Perhaps it is important to emphasize that roles are not material entities in themselves and do not exist beyond the context of interaction. In the light of the definitions, roles should simply be regarded as heuristic tools that subsume a number

of characteristics pertaining to both the subject-person and the action. This, however, does not make them irrelevant, as will be made clearer below, because they provide meaning to action in a narrative, and contribute to ascertaining the actor's public credibility.

That said, in this thesis action is broadly defined as what the actor does. Consequently, it is not restricted to just physical behaviour. John Austin's speech act theory demonstrated how the act of speaking is also action, since certain verbs do more than just the locutionary (the act of saying) (Kaplan 2003: 30). Undeniably, besides kicking, hugging and running, 'in speaking the actor does things; it achieves certain concrete practical results. However, it also positions itself in relation to the other speaking actors, it marks itself in a particular way' (Epstein 2008: 13).

According to Ricoeur (1981: 203-206), action is also like a text since it is (1) fixated; (2) autonomized; (3) relevant; and (4) an open work. For reasons of space it is not possible to develop fully Ricoeur's perspective on action and so it is best to focus on the first two core concepts (1 and 2). Action being fixated implies that it leaves its 'marks on time', which means that 'action itself, action as meaningful, may become an object of science, without losing its character of meaningfulness, through a kind of objectification similar to the fixation which occurs in writing' (Ricoeur 1981: 203). Thereupon, Ricoeur (1981: 206) argues that action leaving its mark is the 'autonomization of action' similar to text: 'in the same way that a text is detached from its author, an action is detached from its agent and develops consequences of its own.' He then develops the claim by highlighting the differences between simple action segments and complex actions, the latter of which leave segments 'so remote from the initial simple segments, which can be said to express the intention of the doer, that the ascription of these actions or action-segments constitutes a problem as difficult to solve as the authorship in some cases of literary criticism' (Ricoeur 1981: 206). What this means, essentially, is that unlike a simple dialogue, where one can gradually ascertain the original meaning of the speaker, action may become a written text that 'is out there', thus not subject to the original intent. In fact, unless one is able to dialogue with the intervening actors, intent becomes a matter of 'guessing'.³³

Of course, interaction does not become meaningless and random. When action is emplotted by roles within a narrative, the meanings of action become restricted and so roles explain by 'predicating' a relatively stable 'line of action.' In other words, they constrain the possible reasons for action being as such, thereby delimiting the possible origins of intent. The following example may clarify some of these points. After

³³ According to Ricoeur (1981), guessing need not be random and unstructured. As mentioned above, processes of guessing need to be validated, meaning that some inferences are obviously better than others in explaining action.

witnessing an individual assisting an elderly woman cross the street, one could report the event in a narrative as ‘the Good Samaritan helped the old lady cross the street.’ The Good Samaritan is the role ascribed to both the action and to the actor who helped the old lady; or according to Ricoeur and Bremond, Good Samaritan established meaning by providing a complete predicate-process to a subject-person. Role therefore also subsumes the characteristics pertaining to that action itself. The role hints at the latter’s intention but does not reveal it, i.e. one is still unaware of why the individual is a Good Samaritan or why he or she helped the old lady in the first place. That choice depends on the nature of the lady herself, the particular setting and how the individual conceptualized the situation in that particular moment in time. If one was aware of all the circumstances and knew the Good Samaritan intimately, both privately and publicly, one could probably surmise the intent.

The difference between role and identities

A crucial characteristic of the foregoing example is that ascribing a role seems like fixing an identity upon an individual. Identification is, in fact, a key process in any type of interaction since one has to classify things in order to act (McCall and Simmons 1966: 64-65).³⁴ By identifying a predicate-process, a role is in itself an identity. However, it is not the identity commonly used in many works of social psychology and sociology. In other words, it is *not a personal identity*, derived from identifying one ‘in terms of categories referring to unique individuals’ (McCall and Simmons 1966: 64-65). This is an important distinction, because roles allocate meaning to action and do not necessarily result from ego conceptions or selfhood.³⁵

Many scholars connect selfhood to identification and by extension to the term identity. McCall and Simmons’ (1966), for example, propose the concept of ‘role-identity’; defined as ‘the character and the role that an individual devises for himself as an occupant of a particular position’ (McCall & Simmons 1966: 67).³⁶ Consequently, ‘role-identity’ encompasses ‘his imaginative view of himself *as he likes to think of*

³⁴ Identification is meant as ‘to be able to make apparent to others, amid a range of particular things of the same type’ (Ricoeur 1992: 27).

³⁵ Ricoeur’s hermeneutical philosophy alongside symbolic interactionism may clarify what is meant by this distinction. Central to symbolic interactionism is the work of George Mead who developed the notions of ‘Self’, ‘Me’ and ‘I’ (Harnisch 2012, 2011b: 39; McCall & Simmons 1966: 53-57). ‘Self’ happens as an actor learns to take the role of the other and examines his or herself from the other perspective (Harnisch 2011b: 39). Mead’s analysis does not exactly parallel Ricoeur’s (1992) but there are commonalities (Ezzy 1998: 246). Ricoeur (1992) proposes somewhat similar conceptions of selfhood (*ipse*) and sameness (*idem*). The latter is ‘a relation of relations’ that allows for one to identify a character as being the same (Ricoeur 1992: 116-118). The former (*ipse*), conversely, is related to one’s own subjective dimension and so inward focused.

³⁶ Italics added.

himself being and acting as an occupant of that position' (Ibid). Hence, role-identity is in fact similar to other ego identities applied by prominent role theorists, seeing as it includes one's own self-conception.³⁷

However, roles, according to the definitions above, are not identities in a personal or inward sense. This explains why Peter Burke and Judy Tully (1977: 883) proposed dividing McCall and Simmons' (1996) concept 'role-identity' into two: identity as 'the internal component of role/ identity' and role as 'the external component.'

Evidently, one cannot ignore that roles do have an impact in personal identities and vice-versa, whereby personal identities provide the actor with a framework for interpretation of the social position that roles supply an actor with; and, on the other hand, actors create plans and perform activities according to the boundaries of their roles, which then reinforce their identity (Nabers 2011: 82-83). However, because this thesis is not looking into self-perception it is important to distinguish between the two widely used concepts.

Roles, Public Sphere and Public Credibility

The question that arises naturally, then, is why is a role important for emplotting a narrative and studying politics? The reason is that action, like text, develops meaning beyond the original intent of the actor (see above), eventually being subsumed under a number of roles. Hence, an actor might either wittingly or unwittingly develop a set of composite roles that may or may not coincide with one's personal identity or selfhood. Unlike beliefs or intrinsic preferences which cannot be observed directly (see Introduction), roles provide meaning to public action – action that is out there - no matter the intent. For that reason, even though roles are a sort of heuristic, they are not negligible because the public sphere has real impact.

The public is a 'nominal construction about boundary and membership' (Ku 2000: 225). Agnes Ku (2000: 226) conceptualizes the public sphere as something that

³⁷ For instance, some scholars define *role conceptions* as a covert expectation that is intrinsic and constitutive of an actor or an attitude (Biddle 1979: 154). Holsti (1970: 230-241, 244-245) applies *national role conceptions* to international politics, which encompasses norms and definitions of ego, such as values, orientations, interests and goals. Wendt (1999) was aware of the terminological complexities, between identities and roles, and so developed a stricter taxonomy: (1) *type identity* which refers to a label placed on people or groups who share common characteristics and is based on intrinsic properties; (2) *role identity* which also depends on other and is derived from occupying a position in a social structure; (3) *collective identity* which takes relation between self and other to its logical conclusion, identification combining role identity with type identity (Ibid). Crucial to Wendt's (1999) conceptualization is therefore *identification* which is intricately connected to selfhood. Hence, Wendt's (1999) process of identification is a sort of holistic undertaking that subsumes both *type* and *role identities* thereby leading to the recognition of self.

‘underlines the existence of a realm of political life where citizens of a particular community come openly to define and contest the cultural and moral meanings of politics, public life, and citizenship.’ Hence, it should be regarded as ‘communicative institution belonging generally to the public domain of citizenship, or more particularly, to civil society’ (Ibid: 227).

It is important to recall that the modern concept of public sphere dates back to Jürgen Habermas’s (1989) seminal book *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. This work traces the rise and fall of the public sphere as an institution of rational-critical dialogue. Perhaps one problem in his influential thesis is that while it portrays the various dichotomies existing in ‘the state/public versus market/private distinction and the public versus mass distinction (...) [it] undertheorizes the conceptual pair of publicness (openness) versus secrecy’ (Ku 2000: 216-217).³⁸ Since Habermas’s analysis delves only briefly into that pivotal distinction of this work, Ku’s (2000) understanding of the public sphere is an excellent way of conceiving roles as part of a non-private domain where meanings are visible and open to contestation. Regrettably, her conception is heavily centred on the domestic state level and especially on those states where citizenship warrants for open political debate. Indeed, not all states match this criterion.

Nevertheless, the concept of public sphere is still useful if extended to global politics. According to Manuel Castells (2008: 78, 80), the international public sphere is a sort of space ‘not subject to any particular sovereign power but, instead, is shaped by the variable geometry of relationships between states and global non state actors. Consequently, the public sphere shapes the actions of traditional states in the international arena (Ibid: 80). Although the public sphere is greatly shaped by the media (Ibid: 79, 89-90; Ku 2000: 227, 231), it is a heuristic concept that acts as a ‘cultural/informational repository of ideas and projects that feed public debate’ (Castells 2008: 79).

The concept of civil society in a global environment consists of the specific civil actors in a particular country (1); international non-governmental organizations (2); social movements that shape globalization by seeking to promote, for example, international justice (3); and, lastly, ‘the emergence of spontaneous, ad hoc mobilizations using horizontal, autonomous networks of communication’ (Ibid: 85-86). Consequently, the public sphere has effects that are very much real in international politics, since public debates reveal or galvanize crises pertaining to the efficiency of the

³⁸ For a detailed description of some of the main criticisms of Habermas’s work on the public sphere, see Nick Crossley and John Roberts’s (2004: 10-17) excellent edited introduction to the topic.

distribution of goods, legitimacy, identity and equity (Ibid: 82-83). Therefore, even those who are not 'globalized' face scrutiny from the public sphere (Ibid: 81).

By expanding the concept of the public sphere to the international, it is possible to propound how politicians are restricted by their own roles.³⁹ Ku's (2000: 236) idea of public credibility - defined as an 'evaluative claim by the public of citizens, of moral status and moral authority about particular actors, institutions, or the whole government on the basis of their public presentations and performances'- is the key reason why politicians cannot fully escape the consequences of their own autonomized actions. Public credibility may, therefore, be extended to role theory. As already discussed, no matter the intent, action is evaluated according to past actions subsumed under a number of roles, which in turn are observed and discussed by a public, both domestic and international.

Roles and Role Conflict within the Public Sphere

By connecting roles to public credibility, it is now possible to develop a few interesting propositions of role theory. On a first note, it is important to be aware that each role has a *counterrole* (Stryker 1980: 58). For instance, in the case of the Good Samaritan, its meaning derives partially from the existence of a semantic opposite.⁴⁰

Individuals are capable of several complex actions and therewith have multiple roles which constitute an aggregate *role set* (Thies 2001; 2009: 5), which then requires a degree of *role cohesiveness*. In other words, two or more roles have to be more or less coherent with each other; otherwise the character becomes strained (Backman 1970: 314). Indeed, cohesiveness, or a lack thereof, means that roles are consistently contested within a particular context, leading to other counter or complementary roles (Harnish 2011a: 8; Cantir & Kaarbo 2012). Naturally, contestation reveals the most interesting corollary of role theory, which is *conflict*, i.e. contradictory meanings between different roles.

Role conflict is classified under two distinct types: *intra-role conflict* and *inter-role conflict*. The former pertains to role divergence within a particular role set and the latter to incongruence between the roles of two different characters (based on Harnisch

³⁹ It is perhaps important to mention that this chapter purposively endorses 'public credibility' rather than 'legitimacy', which I believe is a broader concept including tradition, charisma, emotional empathy, rational discussion and legality. For more on the origins of legitimacy, see Weber (1947: 133-133).

⁴⁰ The idea of all roles being what they are not is an interesting way of capturing the complexities of meaning. Given that roles are linked to performance, signifying action with one role may imply that other domains are marginalized. Roles are therefore one way of conceiving Judith Butler's (1993: 187-222) identification of the real: a role can be one, but not the other, which may lead to marginalization.

2011a: 8; Barnett 1993). With regard to the inner role set, its stability is based on avoiding the following situations:

- Role ambiguity - when the specificity of a role is low;
- Role malintegration - when multiple roles do not interlock;
- Role discontinuity - when different sequential contexts require disjointed roles;
- Role overload - when too many role expectations exist.

Yet, while delving into intra-role conflict is important for evaluating internal coherency, the more interesting case for interaction is inter-role conflict. Returning therefore to the example of the Good Samaritan might be appropriate. Imagine that a politician publicly promised to implement legislation for assisting the elderly cross the street. In this case, Good Samaritan would seem again to be an appropriate way of identifying both the actor and his promise. Thereafter, the audience in the public sphere would observe whether subsequent action is congruent with the role of Good Samaritan. Of course, role theory does not deliberate which specific action will be taken after the promise since it is not concerned with volition and personal identity. It merely points out that there is now an open space for contestation and thus further action. If the promise was never kept, and the actor keeps reaffirming Good Samaritan-like promises, conflict becomes more probable. However, even if the vow is broken, the story continues, for one has to justify oneself with even more words (Heathershaw 2009: 10). This is likely to be captured by the public sphere leading to further contestation and negative public credibility, to which the actor has to pay heed. Another case of role conflict may simply originate from bilateral interaction. If a Good Samaritan faces an Evil-doer, meanings are publicly malintegrated and so for inter-role conflict to subside between the two actors, both have to locate less disparaging roles; thereby leading to a continuous process of adjustment in interaction.

The example reveals that coping with public credibility is essentially a process of 'legitimation' (McCall & Simmons 1966: 95),⁴¹ whereby the actor is gradually forced to cope with situations of conflict. McCall and Simmons (1966: 95-99) and Sebastian Harnisch (2012: 56) thus propose a number of ways of dealing with a rise in inter-role conflict:⁴²

⁴¹ It is important to mention that McCall and Simmons's (1966) mechanisms for legitimation are much broader. According to McCall and Simmons (1966: 95), crises in legitimation are to be found in the ever-present discrepancy between the role-identity itself and the role-support earned from various audiences by a particular role-performance. As mentioned earlier, this chapter is not concerned with the issue of either role-identity or selfhood and therefore the coping responses that were selected avoid introspection. Nevertheless, actors still legitimate their statements because these actions are out in the public sphere and affect public credibility, regardless of their own imagination.

⁴² These responses are similar to Harnisch's (2012: 56) proposals for gradual change in action through role learning. However, much like McCall and Simmons's (1966) theory, they are responses closely related to one's own imagined identity. Still, Harnisch's (2012: 56) alternative is also worthy of being

- Selectively tailor the audience's response to one's action, whereby the norms of 'propriety and polite discourse (...) dictate that we "nicify" the responses to the person';
- Withdraw from the interaction;
- Enact another role within a role set;
- Resort to scapegoating and thus blame someone else for rising role conflict;
- Resort to disavowal of a performance by claiming, for example, that the former statement was not wholly serious and simply an instance of humour;
- Condemn the audience that does not support the action.

A Narrative of bilateral relationships: Cooperation vs. Conflict

Given the importance of inter-role conflict and cohesion, the concept opens up the possibility of cooperation in a way similar to how Robert Axelrod and Robert Keohane (1985) defined it. Both argued that cooperation is not harmony or 'complete identity of interests', but the result of actors adjusting 'behaviour to the actual anticipated preferences of others' (Axelrod & Keohane 1985: 226). Likewise, given that roles subsume actions autonomized in the public sphere, cooperation becomes visible if actions do not question the roles of the other; avoiding thus the problem of public credibility. In other words, cooperation comes about when actors adjust their actions in the public sphere according to the roles of the other; allowing for increased compatibility.

Even though Axelrod and Keohane (1985) mentioned preferences, their conceptualization is still appropriate when modified to role theory. For that reason, narratives emplotted by roles may recreate how cooperation or conflict occurs gradually through time.

II.4. Narratives and Inferring Roles: Methodology for Uzbekistan's bilateral relationships

As indicated in the Introduction and Chapter I, this dissertation:

mentioned. The scholar proposes the following lines of action: the first is -Ego vs. Alterø which means a shift between the -Iø and -Meø segments of a role. This is essentially a dramatic change when the actor is facing a potentially new situation and the -Iø segment of the role tends to reject previous social obligations and -constructs itself as prior or above the obligations of society to an alter-oriented orientation.ø A second shift, labelled -Significant vs. Generalizedø can occur when the actor decides to interact with other significant or generalized others, being essentially a variation of the scope of experience (Harnisch 2012: 56). Finally, -Strong vs. Weak Internalizationø alternations refer to situations when the actor may move from a heavily internalized or committed role to a less committed one (Ibid: 56).

- proposes four narratives for describing Uzbekistan's bilateral relationships with Russia, the United States, Germany and Turkey, and for depicting how conflict, cooperation and rapprochement came to be;
- pertains to evaluating whether President Karimov propounded self-reliant roles in the international public sphere.

In view of these two goals, the remaining sections of this Chapter set out this thesis's methodology for both constructing narratives and inferring roles.

Selecting the actors and the events for the narratives

The aim is to impose narratives of relationships based on the way events were articulated in the international public sphere. For that reason, open parliamentary meetings, senate hearings, opinion articles, transcripts of television appearances, interviews, summits, speeches and legislation are all used to recreate events. More importantly, the lists of all articles used for inferring President Karimov's role set are all indicated in Appendix I.

What determines the presence of actors in the narrative is whether their actions, such as speeches, gesticulations or legislation were given headway by the global media and thus obtained visibility in the international public sphere; all of which can be obtained by the news reports and accounts of international organizations. Consequently, for the United States, Russia, Germany and Turkey, any individual or organization is likely to be a character within the narrative, so long as they have some sway in the international public sphere. For obvious reasons, it is more likely for the foreign ministers, heads of state and government to have larger roles in each narrative.

As concerns Uzbekistan, President Islom Karimov's own public roles will be a central element of most narratives – an assumption that is not farfetched for two reasons: Mr Karimov has been in power since 1989 and has thus been Uzbekistan's constant representative; he also plays a decisive role in Uzbekistan's centralized politics and foreign policy (Kazemi 2003: 208; Luong 2004; Spechler & Spechler 2010: 159). Nevertheless, other actors in Tashkent's political establishment may also be portrayed, so long as they are in the spotlight of the international public sphere. Their actions, though, are all emplotted according to President Karimov's role set. This may be a strong assumption, but it is important to be aware that Uzbekistani officials rarely, if ever, contradict their President's public assertions.⁴³

Inferring the roles of actors in the United States, Russia, Germany and Turkey

⁴³ Interview source (2009-2012). See Appendix IV for information regarding sources.

As concerns Washington, Moscow, Berlin and Ankara's foreign policies, there are ample secondary sources available for determining their specific role sets (see introduction for why those particular actors were selected). So, inferring roles for these actors is less complex than for Uzbekistan. Subsequently, in order to contextualize the stories, each narrative is preceded by a brief introduction on the key roles of those countries. These, then, shall be used to emplot their actions toward Uzbekistani leadership.

Inferring Uzbekistan's roles: circularity and spoken word as the unit of analysis

Inferring roles for Tashkent can be a conundrum, simply because it is a twenty year old independent Republic that only very recently started interacting in the international public sphere.⁴⁴ As the foregoing analysis demonstrated, the relationship between roles and action is reciprocal. Roles are derived from action, but the former provides meaning to the latter. Therefore, a simple way of both inferring and applying roles would be to observe President Karimov's speech acts, infer his roles and then emplot the narrative diachronically. This is the actual approach that is adopted, even though some might categorize it as circular (Muller 2011: 57; Le Prestre 1997a: 12).

Circularity, in any case, need not be a problem and is actually welcomed. Much like the reading of a text, roles and actions within a narrative are part of a general hermeneutical circle: 'the reconstruction of a text as whole necessarily has a circular character, in the sense that the presupposition of a certain kind of whole is implied in the recognition of the parts. And reciprocally, it is in construing the details that we construe the whole' (Ricoeur 1981: 211). So, roles are indeed inferred from actions, which reciprocally predicate actions within the whole narrative. Harnisch (2012: 58-62), for example, applies role theory to three case studies but does not specify how the roles were obtained. Consequently, action and roles are more or less conflated throughout his depiction, whereby roles name action and vice-versa. This, however, is perfectly acceptable herein since the aim is not to make sense of Humean causality or ontological priority; the goal is simply to deliver meaning to a whole process of interaction (Ricoeur's understanding – see above).

That said, the object of analysis is solely President Karimov's spoken word (speeches, interviews and remarks at conferences), since it is *both* directed toward a public sphere, *and* the way in which actors justify and position themselves in relation to

⁴⁴ Scholarship on Uzbekistani foreign policy exists, even though, this thesis disagrees with a number of assumptions regarding the study of Uzbekistan's international relations (see Chapter I).

others (see discussion above). So even if legislation or other actions are useful for determining roles, they would still have been justified and deliberated by spoken word. It is also important to mention that unlike some scholars who focus just on foreign policy statements (e.g. Holsti 1970, Wish 1980, LePrestre et al. 1997), this inquiry assumes that, despite the differences existing between domestic and international politics, leadership has to avoid role contestation within both spheres. So, any type of statement may be important for role inference.

Rhetoric and intra-role coherence: evaluating self-reliance

To infer roles, it is necessary to delve into how the themes of statements are combined and interrelated. In fact 'it is only as bundles that these relations can be put to use and combined so as to produce a meaning' (Levi-Strauss 1955: 431). The paragraphs in each speech are the unit of analysis, all of which are labelled by a theme or topic, based on how it compares to the speech as a whole. In those cases in which scripts are not divided into paragraphs, the speech is split into units according to its main themes.

Ascertaining themes allows for finding categories of ideas in President Karimov's speeches and overall rhetoric. Thereafter, to grasp the meaning of the paragraphs and their importance to the speech as a whole, instances of 'strategic action' are sought for. 'Strategic action' is essentially action 'oriented toward a goal but not necessarily planned to detail or strictly instrumentalist' (Wodak et al. 2009: 32). According to Ruth Wodak et al. (2009: 33), there are six cases of 'strategic action':

- Constructive strategies, in which leadership promotes a certain kind of national identity;
- Strategies of justification in which leadership legitimates its past actions for a common national perception that has been tainted;
- Strategies of transformation, which transform aspects of identity into another conceptualized form;
- Dismantling or destructive strategies, which seek to disentangle an existing construct;
- Strategies of sameness, which create a temporal or spatial homogeneity;
- Strategies of difference (dissimilation), seeking to create temporal or spatial heterogeneity.

Based on these strategies, it is possible to observe how Uzbekistani leadership set forth its epistemology and ontogeny in the public sphere, i.e. the rules for ascertaining truth and declaring the objects about which it is possible and meaningful to speak (Sapsford 2006: 262). This allows for constructing broad 'repertoires' based

on the themes that appear to be consistent throughout President Karimov's speeches (Ibid: 267), from which roles are inferred. Once roles are classified, the overall coherence of the role set is evaluated according to role ambiguity, malintegration, discontinuity and overload so as to locate the potential for intra-role conflict.

The speeches, transcripts and statements made by President Karimov from 1989 to 2010 were obtained from the *Nexis* database and are all indicated in Appendix I. It is important to bear in mind that the statements are all translations into English, which is a suitable way of standardizing them into distinct repertoires. In fact, it is only by assuming first that translating themes is possible that one can then conceive of public interaction between actors speaking different languages. So, it is worth recalling that the purpose herein is not to focus on specific meanings or linguistic cohesion - the formal links between clauses and sentences (Nunan 1993: 21) –, rather to look into how themes delivered publicly can be grouped into roles, and then to evaluate whether they follow the general premises of self-reliance as an English language typology. Evidently, public manifestations are not private political discussions, where special expressions, metaphors and inside jokes tend to be more predominant. Consequently, their translation, while not revealing the complexity behind different meanings, makes repertoires available from which roles can be inferred for an English-speaking readership.

Chronological approach

A chronological approach divided into five periods is adopted to analyze President Karimov's spoken word: 1989-1993, 1994-2001, 2002-2005, 2006-2008 and 2009-2010. The reason for breaking down the analysis into different periods is twofold: on one hand, it facilitates the task of analyzing large amounts of material; on the other hand, it allows for evaluating the possibility of radical changes in rhetoric, which might corroborate whether alignment and/or orientation shifts actually occurred as some scholars proposed (see literature review of chapter 1).

The first period contains statements made by Islom Karimov prior to Uzbekistan's independence. He became Secretary of the Uzbekistan's Communist Party in 1989 - the highest political position in the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (UzSSR). Therefore, references to that period in time are useful to indicate how he positioned himself in the public sphere. That period ends in 1993, which is the year Uzbekistani authorities were forced to issue their own currency and formally disentangle themselves from Russia (Hale 1994). Therefore, the time span of 1989 to 1993 seems to

be a suitable time period for capturing the public meaning of President Karimov's first acts.

Spechler and Spechler (2009: 354) then consider the 1991 to 1999 and the 1999 to 2003/2005 time periods as the occasions Tashkent delinked from Moscow and relied on Washington. Alternatively, this thesis proposes a slightly different time span: the first extending from 1993 to 2001 and the second from 2002 to 2005. The latter corresponds to the so called rise and fall of Washington's influence over Tashkent, starting from establishment of the Karshi-Khanabad (K-2) base in 2002 and ending in demobilization after the Andijan crisis of 2005. According to some authors, after American ascendance, Uzbekistani leadership sought to re-link itself with Russia until 2008 (see literature review in Chapter 1). After this brief pro-Russian period, President Karimov authorized NATO's Northern Distribution Network (NDN) to cross through Uzbekistan in 2008 and so rapprochement with Washington soon became more visible. These time intervals correspond, more or less, to the periods in which Uzbekistani leadership altered its supposed alignments.

Content analysis: purpose, coding and reliability

Content analysis might also reveal some interesting points and is subjective, much like discourse analysis, since it relies on a series of presuppositions regarding the choice of categories and coding (LePrestre 1997: 12). Notwithstanding the limitations, content analysis, based on the frequency count of written works, speeches and interviews of leadership, is a suitable approach for obtaining information (Brecher et al 1969: 89). More specifically, it offers an alternative take on the exogenous content of leadership's speeches and how they evolved over time (LePrestre 1997: 11). Hence, content analysis can signal situations of changes in roles, which are crucial for emplotting the narrative. It is just used for description and not for unravelling meanings (Kesby 2009: 11).

A systematic methodology for classifying roles was presented by Naomi Wish (1980) based on Michael Brecher's et al. (1969) complex foreign policy analysis framework. According to Wish (1980) role conception may be divided into three key variables: *Status*, *Motivational Orientation* and *Substantive Issue-areas*. *Status* refers to the capabilities leadership attributes greater absolute advantage. *Motivational Orientation* reveals the general attitude toward political and international affairs. *Substantial Issue-area* indicates which themes were discussed. The categories which constitute each of these variables are indicated below on table 1 and it is important to mention that substantial issue-areas are not mutually exclusive. For example, it is

perfectly possible for President Karimov to articulate in each paragraph issues connected to both economics and security.

Table 1: Role Conception	
-Status	
<i>a) Capabilities</i>	To which endowments does leadership attach greater absolute advantage, such as human resources, natural resources or economical system, military and local culture.
<i>b) Position toward Others</i>	How does leadership perceive its relative position toward other entities, i.e. is it a lesser partner, an equal one, or a superior one.
- Motivational Orientation	
<i>c) Wish to Expand</i>	Leadership wishes or not to expand into the international arena.
<i>d) Competitive/Cooperative motivations</i>	If leadership wishes to expand into the international arena competitively or cooperatively.
<i>e) The amount of change proposed</i>	The amount of change leadership wishes to see in the domestic and international arenas.
- Substantive Issue-areas	
<i>f) Economic</i>	Discussion on economic resources, growth, development, reform and macroeconomic data.
<i>g) Security</i>	Discussion of military issues or national security threats
<i>h) Other</i>	Discussion of issues not related to economics or security, such as culture, history, environment, justice and education
<i>i), j) Political</i>	i) Promotion or j) inhibition of political or ideological principles related to democracy, constitutions, authoritarianism, elections, rule of law, governmental officials, parties and the role of the state
<i>k), l) Universal Values</i>	k) Promotion or l) inhibition of issues related to racial harmony, universal justice and human rights
<i>m) Unilateral Oriented</i>	Issues related to international politics emphasizing own interests, zero-sum games, nationalism and pursuit of own goals.
<i>n) Multilateral or Integration Oriented</i>	Issues related to international politics emphasizing the need for multi-lateral approaches, bi-lateral cooperation and deeper engagement.

Source: Wish (1980: 538-540)

The paragraphs of each speech are the unit of analysis and detailed information on both the coding procedures for each of the role conception variables is available in the Appendix II. Lastly, content analysis should guarantee reliability, i.e. yield the same results from identical phenomena regardless of the circumstances of application (Krippendorff 1980: 129-130). In order to allow for minimum reliability, an inquiry should be reproducible, that is allow for the investigatory processes to be repeated using different coders (Ibid: 131-132). Owing to time and budgetary limitations, it is not possible to duplicate procedures by applying different coders, but the results of content the analysis are all indicated in Appendix III.

III. Inferring roles and role cohesion from 1989 to 2010

Following the methodology of Chapter II, bundles of thematic relationships were inferred by focusing on the instances of strategic action employed by President Karimov from 1989 to 2010. This type of rhetorical analysis revealed three different group-types of repertoires related to technocracy, cultural authenticity and prestige, from which fifteen consistent roles were then located (the findings are summarized in table 2 of section III.6 of this Chapter).

The inferences have a number of interesting implications, showing that a relatively coherent public rhetoric was employed by President Karimov from the start. This suggests then that the public orientation did not shift (on definitions of orientation see Chapter I). In fact, self-reliance seems to be a suitable way of capturing President Karimov's overall role set from 1989 to 2010, given his persistent call for *defending international equality* and *seeking genuine independence*.

On the other hand, the discussion below does show that strategic actions were fluid. The rhetoric emanating from Uzbekistan's leader was dynamic and actually far from following a univocal trend. President Karimov gradually shifted his emphasis, particularly around the period of the Andijan crisis, decreasing technocratic rhetoric and concentrating on authenticity.⁴⁵ For this reason, any narrative on Uzbekistani relations cannot ignore the effects of both the Andijan crisis and the Colour revolutions on Mr Karimov's rhetoric, particularly on how these occurrences revealed a degree of growing intra-role conflict within the relatively stable role set. This means then that the relative consistency of the two central roles (*seeker of genuine independence* and *defender of equality*) is not a sign of a wholly stable political rhetoric. While President Karimov was able to face difficult situations without seeming entirely inconsistent, he still had to adapt to a number of discontinuities that gradually revealed role malintegration (see Chapter II for the main concepts of role theory).

To show how the roles subsume the key strategic actions of President Karimov, sections one (III.1) through five (III.5) describe the repertoires found for each period of analysis. Lastly, section six (IV.6) deliberates on the pivotal roles, their overall coherence, cases of intra-role conflict and how self-reliance seems to capture the essence of President Karimov's role set.

III.1. Repertoires from 1989 to 1993

⁴⁵ Nick Megoran (2008: 26) provides a detailed description of how Uzbekistan's leader underlined national sources to development as opposed to universal scientific laws, particularly after the 2005 Andijan crisis. His work, and Sarah Kendziora's (2007) article on local poetry, are excellent descriptions of Uzbekistani discourses and the impact of the Andijan crisis on domestic politics.

Three general repertoires were inferred for the 1989-1993 period: (1) *control of economic development for the sake of stability*; (2) *genuine independence and pursuit of international relations on an equal basis*; (3) *defending the image and culture of the Uzbeks*. These three interconnected themes allow for inferring ten roles:

- *Expert on economic issues*;
- *Protector of stability*;
- *Protector of Uzbekistan's great image*;
- *Defender of Uzbekistan's international equality*;
- *Seeker of genuine independence*;
- *Technocratic leader*;
- *Developer of Uzbekistan's economic future*;
- *Undisputed authority*;
- *Definer of Uzbek authenticity*;
- *Voice for a de-ideologized transition*.

Control of economic development for the sake of stability

Economics was by far the most referenced issue-area during the period (see Appendix III for a frequency count). More importantly, though, it was built as an incontestable concern, to the point that the public discussion of any other subject-area was rendered futile. In fact, no other statement during Uzbekistan's rise to independence summarizes the preponderance of economics as well as President Karimov's slogan 'the priority of economics over politics must be assured.'⁴⁶

Andrew March (2003) argues that President Karimov sought to establish a 'pre-political consensus' to ensure legitimacy. In other words he imposed an ontogeny whereby gradual economic development was constructed to be both incontestable and unavoidable.⁴⁷ Scholarship has also emphasized Mr Karimov's job in *Gosplan* as a factor in shaping his predominantly economical worldview (Lewis 2008; Bohr 1998; Carlisle 1995a,b). His background and experience in the area certainly led him to become Minister of Finance of the Uzbek SSR in 1986. His term in office was short

⁴⁶ See for example 'Uzbekistan; Karimov defends his policies against accusations of strong-arm tactics' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 12 June 1993.

⁴⁷ March (2003: 317) refers to President Karimov's book dedicated to economic reform (*Uzbekistanô -sobstvennaya modeløperekhoda na rynochnyye otnosheniya*; Uzbekistan - its own model of transition to market relations), citing five principles for development: (1) economics has priority over politics; (2) the state is the main reformer; (3) all reform must occur under the rule of law; (4) the state underlines the importance of strong social protection; (5) the transformation to a market economy must be thought out and gradual.

lived, however, given that in that same year, the notorious 'Cotton' or 'Uzbek Affair' reached a new height. Mr Rafiq Nishonov was made the new Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Uzbek SSR (CPUZSSR) with the task of tackling corruption (Carlisle 1995b: 195; Critchlow 1990). Islom Karimov, being connected to the previous establishment, was relocated to the governorship of the Qashqardaryo region,⁴⁸ which turned out to be another short-lived tenure.

After the violent conflicts in the Ferghana Valley between Uzbeks and Meshketian Turks, Moscow apparently mitigated its confrontational attitude and decided to replace Mr Nishonov quickly. Islom Karimov was chosen, becoming General Secretary of the Communist party of the Uzbek SSR on June 23 1989. Naturally, his nomination to the most powerful position in the Soviet Republic showed that Moscow was concerned with how rapid reform was negatively affecting the region. It was thus a sign that perhaps the pace of change had to decrease in order to assuage local powerbrokers.⁴⁹

Once in office, Secretary General Karimov conveyed a number of self-lauding slogans to the public, praising his own credentials as an experienced economist. When discussing the country's agricultural problems, he evinced his own skills and insight with clear-cut remarks: 'for me as an economist this [agricultural reform] is clear.'⁵⁰ Moreover, he strategically differentiated himself from rival reformist appeals by emphasizing that politicians should be aware of economics: 'I personally find it hard to deal with politicians who fail to consider the economic consequences of each step they take.'⁵¹

Indeed, while he consolidated his leadership, he applied economicist rhetoric to almost all situations in the surrounding political landscape. For instance, nearly two years after the violent crisis in the Ferghana Valley, the now President Karimov highlighted that the root cause had been social-economical instability,⁵² thereby fitting nicely with the analogies and slogans he was using at the time: 'each person is now viewing the situation [the political crisis] through a prism of wellbeing [sic]. Uzbeks

⁴⁸ It is important to note that Rafiq Nishonov had already been implicated in a controversial conspiracy to remove Sharof Rashidov from power in 1969 - the former patron of Islom Karimov's political network and the Secretary General of the Communist party of the Uzbek SSR, from 1959 to 1983 (Allworth 1990: 304-305; Vaisman 1995: 115-116).

⁴⁹ Many Uzbekistani politicians and businessmen had their status and financial livelihood menaced by Secretary Gorbachev's reformist policies (Vaisman 1995: 196). Mr Karimov was a member of those elites and so his appointment signals a retreat from the transformative policies taken during the *Perestroika* period.

⁵⁰ 'President of Uzbekistan interviewed' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 15 April 1991.

⁵¹ 'Uzbek President tells *Pravda* he is looking for cooperation, not aid' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 7 August 1993.

⁵² 'President of Uzbekistan interviewed' *op. cit.*

have a saying: *a hungry man hears music with his stomach*.⁵³ This bit of popular wisdom was a response to the economic crisis in the region. *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* brought grave economic concerns to many former Soviet citizens, undermining the future of Soviet cohesion. Hence, Mr Karimov centred his focus on the immediate economic grievances and its effects on stability: 'who will be swept away first and foremost when the population's indignation at spiraling [sic] prices comes to a head, when the present shortage of food products grows even more acute?' As he became President of independent Uzbekistan in December 1991, he adamantly differentiated himself from the 'shock therapy' policies of Yegor Gaidar, accusing him of perverting stability and of instigating problems, instead of solving them (see Chapter IV).⁵⁴

President Karimov did also call for economic development and thus change, but only through careful supervision and control. In one instance he stated that 'firmness, an authoritarian approach, if you wish, in realization of the chartered policy is needed in the transition period.'⁵⁵ Obviously, this appeal is nothing other than a rejection of economic freedoms. What is also revealing about the example is that President Karimov apparently had no qualms in admitting publicly that Uzbekistan was endorsing authoritarianism, claiming that political oppositions are useless unless constructive: 'an [constructive] opposition will defend not personal interests, but convictions, [and not] a policy and decisions which correspond to the interests of this or that party.'⁵⁶ Even regarding the press, President Karimov had no inhibitions in showing his immense scepticism toward their liberties and biased opinions: 'like it or not, there are no absolutely independent newspapers. No one will change my mind in this regard.'⁵⁷

In sum, during a backdrop of general reform in the Soviet Union, President Karimov built his career challenging the rising reformist trends. So, based on his strategies of construction and differentiation, it is possible to subsume this general repertoire under five roles: *expert on economic issues*; *protector of stability*; *technocratic leader*; *developer of Uzbekistan's economic future*; *undisputed authority*; and voice for a *de-ideological transition*.

Genuine independence and pursuit of international relations on an equal basis

⁵³ 'Speaking of borders means breaking up Central Asia' *Official Kremlin News Broadcast*, 15 May 1992. Italics added.

⁵⁴ For President Karimov's views on Yegor Gaidar and Russia's shock therapy, see: 'Speaking of Borders Means Breaking up Central Asia' op. cit.

⁵⁵ 'Uzbekistan; Karimov defends his policies' op. cit.

⁵⁶ 'Interview with Uzbek President' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 3 June 1991.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

In September 1992, President Karimov celebrated the one year anniversary of independence with a huge festival, where he proclaimed the beginning of Uzbekistan's greatness: 'one year of independence is only the beginning of a great path. Our life itself, the passing events, are confirming the correctness of the path taken by us, the tasks we have placed ahead of us [sic]. We are building the foundations and pillars of an independent Uzbek state.'⁵⁸ There is nothing particularly strange about a politician promoting the future of his state. What is interesting about the latter statement is that Uzbekistan was already independent at the time. So why mention the 'pillars of an *independent* Uzbek state' and not just the 'pillars of an Uzbek state'? This apparent tautology is not random and by the end of the speech it makes perfect sense: 'the aim of our policy consists in a *genuinely independent Uzbekistan*.'⁵⁹

What is then the difference between independence and genuine independence?⁶⁰ As is made clear in a number of statements by President Karimov, genuine independence seems to be more than just formally recognized independence. It calls, instead, for disentanglement from dependence: 'we [the Uzbek people] must in our own territory and in external political and economic relations be *self-reliant* and tackle all issues solely in the interests of our people.'⁶¹ Furthermore, he stated in 1993 that 'as a representative of Uzbekistan I want to say that we have no nostalgia [for the Soviet Union]. We will not return to the past. For us the only way is forward- only forward.'⁶² This last point is somewhat ironic because, before and immediately after independence, President Karimov had been in favour of continuing with a Soviet Union-like system (a point that is more evident in Chapter IV). Nevertheless, once becoming independent, Mr Karimov was less constrained in lambasting against the region's Soviet past. Uzbekistan's President remonstrated against the fact that Moscow had implemented a limited model of development for Uzbekistan, based almost

⁵⁸ 'Karimov addresses the Republic on Independence Day' BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 3 September 1992.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Even though the intricate meanings within the Uzbek language are not the concern herein (see Chapter II), Uzbek lexicology offers an explanation, given that there are two words commonly used for independence: *Mustaqillik* and *Istiqlol*. According to a popular dictionary available in contemporary Uzbekistan: 'it is possible to attain full independence after having carried out the whole meaning of *Istiqlol*. The meaning of independence (*Mustaqillik*) comes from the word *Istiqlol* and its whole essence is associated with achieving that status (í) It is possible for many states to have obtained independence (*istiqlol*) and not been able to release themselves from economic dependence (Author's own translation) (Muminov 2010: 148-149). Upon paraphrasing the definition, what distinguishes *Mustaqillik* from *Istiqlol* is the degree of economic dependence. In other words, states may be 'formally independent, in that they have achieved nominal freedom for their own citizens, but not yet 'genuinely independent (*Mustaqillik*), seeing as they may still depend on others. In sum, if Uzbekistan is to achieve *Mustaqillik* it has to liberate itself from the shackles of economic dependency.

⁶¹ This reference to self-reliance is one of the few instances that a reference made by President Karimov was translated into English as self-reliant. See 'Congress of CP' BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 13 December 1990. Italics added.

⁶² 'Uzbek President Tells Pravda' op. cit.

exclusively on agriculture and cotton exploitation. Still, he was careful in not delinking the country from the Soviet Union and Russia, even though he didn't hesitate in underlining his wish for a particular type of independence: 'Uzbekistan links its future to a union federation, but this federation must be such that we must see our own interest and see those matters we delegate to the union will definitely be tackled.'⁶³ As the future of the Soviet Union was being negotiated, Uzbekistan's leader demonstrated that he was hoping for a reformed and less centralized Soviet federation and so consistently underlined Leninist principles of self-determination - a trend that, at the time, was otherwise commonplace in the Soviet Union.⁶⁴

Uzbekistani leadership also insisted on not being regarded as a lesser partner – a notion that soon became associated with the idea of international equality and disentanglement. Equality in the international public sphere was related to *realpolitik* and President Karimov's public views regarding relative gains.⁶⁵ In one interview he stated that: 'if you look at it through the prism of imperial thinking, we are happy that it [Russia] is growing weaker. The principle which we uphold is full independence and sovereignty of each state.' President Karimov, notwithstanding, assures his audience that he does not fully endorse weakening Russia, so long as the relationship is equal: 'I am against weakening relations [with Russia]. We are bound to stay with Russia in many complex situations which we expect to encounter on the road to independence (...) these relations must be equal in all respects.' However, in other circumstances, President Karimov made it clear that he was everything but naïve regarding the so-called 'imperial way of thinking' of his potential rivals: 'no matter how much this treaty [the CIS Military Treaty] of the four republics is disguised, it is nothing other than an attempt of the stronger, potentially strong republics to dictate their conditions to others.'⁶⁶ It would thus seem that the only way to solve the selfish urges of more powerful states would be to guarantee that all remain on equal footing.

The issue of defending equality and seeking genuine independence is connected to non-interference and maintaining the *status quo* in Central Asia. This became especially clear when conflict escalated in Tajikistan: 'my view on this [on maintaining borders intact] is unequivocal. Uzbeks live there [in Tajikistan]. We will be with them,

⁶³ -Congress of CP...øop. cit.

⁶⁴ Returning to Lenin's teachings was widely popular at the time in the Soviet Union and was one of Mr Gorbachev's main political slogans. President Karimov apparently absorbed this discourse and referred occasionally to Leninist self-determination. See for example -Speech by KarimovøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 7 July 1990.

⁶⁵ For an excellent discussion on the differences between absolute and relative gains and their connections liberalism and realism, see David Baldwin (1993: 4-8).

⁶⁶ -President Karimov interviewedøop. cit.

body and soul, we will protect them, but Uzbeks now reside within Tajikistan and are citizens of Tajikistan. They must obey its laws and Constitution.’⁶⁷

It is also worth mentioning that President Karimov did give special prominence to obtaining international investment and reaching out to other partners. Evidently, these types of appeals did not match well with his other public demonstrations concerning dependency and equality, but he praised, for example, the fact that in the 1920s and 1930s many young people from Uzbekistan went to Germany to study.⁶⁸ Yet, despite evincing some good-will, he also placed strict conditions on international engagement: ‘I would have wanted the interest shown in the republic to have been global so that contacts are solid and de-ideologized.’⁶⁹ The reference to ‘de-ideologized’ should be read carefully and was in fact another key slogan. As Mr Karimov’s appeals for technocratic authoritarianism became more predominant, he went as far to argue that politics or issues not directly related to economic growth were merely ideological, portraying himself, either consciously or unconsciously, as a de-ideologized figure. Consequently, the importance given to equal and non-dependent economic relations allows for inferring three roles: *defender of Uzbekistan’s equality*; *seeker of genuine independence*; and *de-ideologized voice for transition*.

Defending the image of the Uzbek people and inculcating authentic spirituality

The notion of equality is also tied with defending the international image of Uzbekistan. During the period, President Karimov remonstrated against a number of portrayals made by foreign journalists, especially those from Russia, whom he accused of defaming Uzbeks. For example, he proclaimed in 1989 that ‘whoever they may be, to whichever nation they may belong, [they] must and will be subjected to severe punishment so that no one will ever again think of casting a shadow over the good name of the Uzbek People, of whom genuine internationalism, good will, goodness of heart and hospitality are characteristic traits.’⁷⁰

Mr Karimov also highlighted that the Uzbeks had been historically exploited and that their warm hospitality had been distorted by external forces.⁷¹ In some cases, he was quick to underline how the Soviet Union had contributed to repressing Uzbek culture, given that ‘everything was banned: ‘religion was persecuted, mosques closed

⁶⁷ ‘Speaking of Borders Means Breaking up Central Asia...’ op. cit.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ ‘Second Day’s Debate on Gorbachev’s Report’ *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 25 September 1989.

⁷¹ Uzbek people being hospitable is an idea that was supported by Soviet ideology and is thus not entirely novel. For a very interesting discussion on the ways Uzbekistani elites were perceived both domestically and within the larger Soviet Union, see Allworth (1990).

down, everything that was national, deeply national, was suppressed.’⁷² As an alternative, he argued in 1991 that the Uzbeks had a new chance for building a great future: ‘currently in the republic the national arts and crafts are being actively recreated, in one word, overcoming the aftermath of decades and the artificially cultivated theory that we had entered socialism bypassing capitalism [sic].’⁷³

Furthermore, he lauded openly Uzbekistan’s so-called ancestors. In 1992 he opened the anniversary of independence speech with a strong allusion to Uzbekistan’s contribution to culture: ‘the current festival will reflect the great achievements of our forefathers such as Imam Bukhari, [word indistinct] Termezi, Akhmet Yasavi, Amir Temur, Alisher Navoi and many other dozens of our forefathers.’⁷⁴ So, it would seem then that the emphasis given to cultural authenticity during the period can be subsumed under two roles: *protector of Uzbekistan’s great image*; and *definer of Uzbek authenticity*.

III.2. Repertoires from 1994 to 2001

President Karimov’s repertoires for the previous period called for *control of economic development for the sake of stability*. However, from 1994 to 2001, conflicts in Central Asia induced a slight change to the theme. As Tashkent’s experience with independence progressed, the concept of *Control* was better defined and a broader notion related to preserving security was adopted publicly. However, the content remained more or less the same, as shown below.

Three general themes persevered: (1) *preservation of security for the sake of controlling development and stability*; (2) *genuine independence and pursuit of international relations on an equal basis*; (3) *defending the image of the Uzbek people and inculcating authentic spirituality*. The way in which President Karimov continued justifying these repertoires means that no significant alterations were found in the roles discussed above. Instead, four additional roles were inferred:

- *Voice for a non-militaristic Central Asia*;
- *Mercantilist entrepreneur*;
- *Bridge to joining other markets*;
- *Fomenter of defence autonomy in Central Asia*.

Preservation of security for the sake of economic development and stability

⁷² Interview with Uzbek President op. cit.

⁷³ President of Uzbekistan Interviewed op. cit.

⁷⁴ Karimov Addresses the Republic op. cit.

President Karimov expanded the concept of economic stability by juxtaposing it to border security. By publicly emphasizing control and security, President Karimov was able to construct and justify the need for safety. In August 1999, he stated during a Parliamentary Session that ‘our principal strategic goal remains unchanged, the same. It is to build a free and democratic state based on a market economy and to lay firm foundations for a civil society. Simply speaking, it is to achieve the high living standards and quality of the developed countries without blindly copying their model of development and experience.’⁷⁵ This aim did not differ from the conclusions already surmised, but in other situations President Karimov conditioned freedom to a human need for peace: ‘What do human beings want? They want freedom. What do human beings want? They want to see happy lives for their children. They want their beliefs to come true. It is a natural thing, no matter what their nationality. That is why I should say that it has become like a disease to understand and perceive that peace has become an ordinary thing or rule of our everyday lives, as if peace has fallen from the sky, from the moon without difficulties.’⁷⁶ The statesman has to ensure that the country’s borders are impervious to any kind of attack: ‘since today we want to build a free, stable and prosperous life, the most vital guarantee is to ensure the security of our country and inviolability of our borders.’⁷⁷ Border security is related to perceived foreign threats, whilst controlling stability is a means of triggering economic growth,⁷⁸ and so debating or even doubting the expert analysis of Uzbekistan’s leader is sidelined, as his rhetoric carves a pre-political consensus that cannot be disputed.⁷⁹ Accordingly, he continued propounding the following supposedly incontestable priorities: ‘the first is security. The second is humanitarian issues [sic], that is the issues concerning a human being, and creating humane conditions [sic]. The third issue is economy. The fourth issue is ecological matters.’⁸⁰ By now, President Karimov begins to somewhat contradict himself, since he had previously mentioned the priority of economics over politics (see discussion above).

⁷⁵ ‘Uzbek President’s Speech at Parliamentary Session’ *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 19 August 1999.

⁷⁶ ‘Uzbek President Speaks on Bomb Attacks’ *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 16 February 1999.

⁷⁷ ‘President Karimov Says Security and Unity Prime Tasks of State’ *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 3 September 1998.

⁷⁸ See examples of the importance of state control in the following transcripts: ‘President visits Eastern region’ *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 23 August 2001. There, Mr Karimov argues that the state by selling cotton is able to reinvest in industry; ‘President Karimov criticizes economic sector’s performance’ *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 1 January 2001, is one of many instances in which President Karimov explained the situation of Uzbekistan’s economy.

⁷⁹ The term ‘pre-political’ consensus is borrowed from March (2002, 2003), who showed persuasively that President Karimov adopted an authoritarian approach that made many issues, such as economic gradualism, seem indisputable.

⁸⁰ ‘Uzbek head criticized OSCE for focusing on human rights’ *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 17 November 1999.

Preserving security is compatible with very gradual reform and so in 1994 he persisted with the usual slogan: 'in Uzbekistan we operate in accordance with the popular saying: "Don't destroy your old home before you have built a new one."' In other words we have taken the constructive path rather than destroying what we had created.⁸¹ Furthermore, the task of maintaining security is argued to be a sort of technocratic undertaking, i.e. de-ideologized and thus not contestable: 'let nobody seek any sort of politics here. There is the only one policy here: security, security and again the security and tranquillity of those people who live in our land (...) That is why everyone is bound to create all necessary conditions to ensure that our borders are inviolable.'⁸² As previously analyzed, ideologies are 'strategically destroyed' as economics is set to be superior to politics.⁸³ Additionally, he reinforced his supposedly unbiased credentials by declaring that even when the communist Uzbek SSR existed he was not ideological: 'incidentally, I myself did not attend party school.'⁸⁴

Many of these rhetorical repertoires are a public response to the turbulent 1990s context, particularly to the crises in the Caucasus and, more importantly, to the civil wars in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. As concerns the Caucasus, President Karimov showed how stability was put into question when ideology permeated politics: 'in 1989-1990 there was a danger in Uzbekistan that incompetent people would come to power on the crest of the democratic wave, as happened in the Caucasus.'⁸⁵ President Karimov was referring to the former Presidents of Azerbaijan and Georgia, Abulfaz Elçibey and Zviad Gamsakhurdia. The former was a poet and the latter a philosopher and so both were considered unsuitable for the type of technical management needed in a statesman.

Security also became the pervasive topic once the war in Tajikistan escalated, as President Karimov linked the violence in Dushanbe to undesirable instability: 'go and see the situation in Tajikistan, show on the TV how people live there, shooting in the streets, killing people in the entrances of buildings, innocent people are being killed (...) we have become indifferent to some extent. So bad and evil things are happening around us, one can see instability everywhere.'⁸⁶

⁸¹ -Karimov Interview with Russian Paper *BBC Summary of World of Broadcasts*, 1 June 1994.

⁸² -Central Asian Summit: Uzbek head details Afghan threat *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 21 April 2000.

⁸³ For a reference by President Karimov to how economics is superior to politics, see -Uzbek President satisfied with results of Moscow visit *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 3 March 1994.

⁸⁴ -Karimov interview with Russian Paper *op. cit.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ After practically five years of conflict, peace in Tajikistan was negotiated in Moscow, in April 1997, when President Emomalili Rahmon agreed to have thirty percent of the government's ministries allocated to the opposition (Horsman 1999: 39-40). For the citation, see -Uzbek President Speaks on Bomb Attacks *op. cit.*

Beyond acute political quarrels and military interventions,⁸⁷ President Karimov showed an intense dislike for Mirzo Ziyo, the Tajik Minister of Emergency Situations, who had been a member of United Tajik Opposition (UTO). Mr Ziyo was connected to Juma Namangoni and Tohir Yoʻldosh - the leaders of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), who had fled from Uzbekistan to Tajikistan before eventually moving to Afghanistan (Akbarzadeh 2005: 41; Jonson 2006: 113).⁸⁸

The IMU's perceived threat was systematically underlined by President Karimov. He portrayed the organization as extremist; responsible for the December 1997 killing of security officials; and for orchestrating the February 1999 terrorist attacks in Tashkent. While those responsible for the latter hostilities remain in dispute,⁸⁹ the IMU did lead two incursions onto Uzbekistan's border in the summers of 1999 and 2000. For that reason, Chechnya and Afghanistan were gradually portrayed by CIS leadership as harbours of terrorism and a menace to the world at large. As a matter of fact, the prominent discourses of Islamic terror - so prevalent in the United States and Europe after the 11 September attacks - were already, in the 1990s, a key feature of President Karimov's rhetoric: 'they are not the representatives of a certain country or a party or movement. These are criminals who have committed various crimes in their countries and are at present hiding from punishment. They speak various languages - Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Tajik, Afghan and even foreign languages. Their aims are terrorism, taking hostages, violence, encroachment upon the constitutional system of states.'⁹⁰ Many of these terrorists were described as jealous of Russia and Uzbekistan's stable regimes⁹¹ and also products of the situation in Afghanistan: 'we have genuine information that these centres are based in Afghanistan. Today we have grounds to state that there are similar centres in Pakistan, and we know their whereabouts.'⁹²

In spite of President Karimov's public concerns over the conflicts in Afghanistan and Tajikistan, they were not the only targets of his rhetorical attacks, since Russia too was constructed as untrustworthy. For example, President Karimov mentioned that

⁸⁷ See, for example, Charles Fairbanks et al. (2001) and Stuart Horsman (1999) for accounts of Tajikistan's Civil War and Uzbekistani involvement.

⁸⁸ President Karimov may have had a personal grievance against the IMU, since in 1992 he was forced to go to Namangan in order to settle an uprising led by Juma Namangoni and Tohir Yoʻldosh (the two leaders of the IMU), who both had called for Uzbekistan to become an Islamic Republic. President Karimov was at the time intimidated and humiliated during his attempt to assuage the local populace. For a more detailed account of these events, read Adeeb Khalid's (2007) excellent book.

⁸⁹ See Polat & Butkevich's (2000) detailed account of the various conspiracies surrounding the 1999 attempt on President Karimov's life.

⁹⁰ 'Uzbek Defence Minister Says Army on High Alert in View of the Kyrgyz Situation' *BBC Summary of World News*, 8 September 1999.

⁹¹ On jealousy, see 'President Karimov says 30 suspects arrested following Tashkent Bombings' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 23 March 1999.

⁹² 'Central Asian Presidents' Press Conference' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 26 March 1998.

altercations between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were instigated by Russian secret services⁹³ and that Moscow had selfish goals for Central Asia: 'we must openly acknowledge Russia's presence in the Central Asian region and also Russian interests in the Central Asian region, and not to play any games here. Yes, Russia had its interests, has and will have them in this region.'⁹⁴ Overall, this friction between Tashkent and Moscow is explained in greater detail in Chapter IV.

Returning again to border security, President Karimov continued arguing for stability and connecting it to national independence: 'if I am an independent state, if I have declared before my own people that we are independent, if we are masters of our fate and if our future is in our hands, then why should our borders be protected by foreign forces? What will the forces protecting the borders demand?'⁹⁵ Undoubtedly, protecting borders without recourse to external assistance tied nicely with the concept of genuine independence. For that reason, Mr Karimov continued propounding the roles described above, although he was more adamant about defence autonomy for the whole region. All in all, this public concern can be reduced to the role of *fomenter of defence autonomy in Central Asia*.

Genuine independence and pursuit of international relations on an equal basis

President Karimov continued calling for respect of sovereignty, equality and independence from supra-national organizations. More than once he argued that: 'I would like to reaffirm that Uzbekistan does not interfere in other states' internal affairs, that it is for the development of international cooperation, that it wants to build partnership with other countries on an equal footing [sic] and that it is for settling all sorts of conflicts or disputes only through peaceful political and lawful means.'⁹⁶

An issue-area that increasingly became connected to the topic of sovereignty was President Karimov's rejection of any military blocs such as NATO or the Collective Security Treaty's Rapid Response program: 'Uzbekistan does not join and will not join

⁹³ 'Karimov says Russian intelligence provoking Uzbek-Tajik friction' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 30 November 1998.

⁹⁴ 'Uzbek leader says Russia had, has, will have interests in Central Asia' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 22 June 2000.

⁹⁵ 'Uzbek President gives interview on relations with other Central Asian states' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 31 October 1998.

⁹⁶ President Karimov's observation is not exactly true and this issue will be discussed again in the Conclusion. Indeed, Tashkent, alongside Moscow, was active in endorsing the *Kulabi* and *Leninbadi* factions in the Tajik civil war. President Karimov explicitly supported the popular front led by Mr Kenjayev (a *Leninbadi*) in its fight against the UTO (Jonson 2006; Akiner 2001: 21). Nevertheless, in the case of countries outside Central Asia, President Karimov tended to argue against interference. For example, he was sceptical of pan-Turkic solidarity toward Uighurs and described the war in Chechnya as an internal Russian affair. See for example 'Uzbek leader warns helping Uighurs could upset relations with China' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 9 June 1998.

any military and political blocs. This is against the common goals and tasks that are effectively enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. We do not want old times returned again.’⁹⁷ He further endorsed non-militarism as he voiced the need to avoid expansionism and aggression: ‘it should be noted that the defence doctrine outlined by the republican leadership is purely defensive in nature and displays the peaceful policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan.’⁹⁸

It is clear that many of these interpretations of sovereignty and non-militarism correlate with seeking genuine independence and defending equality, given that Mr Karimov continued emphasizing the importance of being treated equally by whomever he engaged with. For example, during a CIS summit he stated that ‘relations between the CIS countries should be built on the basis of equality and these relations should be mutually profitable (...) this means that one big country should not rule over other countries.’⁹⁹ The last part of this statement seems clearly aimed at Moscow. In other circumstances, however, President Karimov was careful in not disdaining Eurasia’s largest country by admitting that Russia was a partner, so long as equality was preserved: ‘our bilateral treaty with Russia has been and remains effective. We have been friends and will maintain friendship henceforth. But I wish Russia to see Uzbekistan as an equal partner.’¹⁰⁰

As a contrast to Russia, President Karimov did show some enthusiasm for integration with Central Asian Republics,¹⁰¹ by appealing briefly in the mid-1990s to Turkestan being ‘Our Common Home’.¹⁰² Still, this very vague ambition of a ‘Turkestan’ somewhat contradicted his more unilateral stance. Equality was in fact the consistent slogan emanating from President Karimov’s rhetoric and ‘Turkestan’ was barely if ever publicly mentioned by the turn of the century. Indeed, besides condemning the CIS, he also showed scepticism toward the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO): ‘another thing which does not suit us and which we have always protested against is that trade and economic issues have become secondary issues and the organization ECO is mainly being used for political ends (...) The countries which feel themselves

⁹⁷ ‘President visits Eastern region’ op. cit.

⁹⁸ ‘Military doctrine is one of defense’ *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 22 February 2000.

⁹⁹ ‘Uzbek president gives interview on relations’ op. cit.

¹⁰⁰ ‘CIS relations depend on Yeltsin’s successor, says Uzbek Leader’ *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 9 March 1999.

¹⁰¹ ‘Presidents call Tajikistan’s joining Central Asian Economic Union’ *Interfax*, 30 March 1998.

¹⁰² President Karimov’s call for unity amongst the people of Central Asia was later developed in his 1997 book. Therein ‘Turkestan is Our Common Home’ is argued to be ‘a humane and constructive process because it is aimed at achieving interethnic accord in the region. Undoubtedly, this policy fully serves the strategic state and national interests of all Central Asia’ (Karimov 1997: 46). However, by the late 1990s, Turkestan and its quixotic harmony no longer appeared in President Karimov’s rhetoric.

big, above all, countries like Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, are trying to exert their influence as much as possible on other member countries.’¹⁰³

Integration therefore was not a key public concern, even though President Karimov conceded that the CIS was necessary for the sake of economics: ‘not a single state in the Commonwealth of Independent States will be able to achieve genuine independence on its own, without economic cooperation.’¹⁰⁴ Even regarding economics, though, he consigned strict conditions to such relations, reminiscent of classic mercantilism: ‘I said this about a thousand times, and I would like to repeat it again: a country has a future, is able to achieve progress and positive results and get stronger only if it earns more money in foreign currency than it spends buying things, that is, if exports exceed imports.’¹⁰⁵

Not all though were sceptical retorts, as President Karimov did actually show interest in increasing economic links with the West, especially with the United States: ‘I would like to make an official statement to the effect that Uzbekistan is interested in seeing our relations with the United States strengthened and grow. We are also interested in seeing American business, and American capital, take its rightful place in the Uzbekistani market.’¹⁰⁶ This clear-cut appraisal was in part related to the wish to obtain technology and thus become a ‘civilized country’: ‘I want to (...) take advantage of this opportunity to let you all know that [we intend to] (...) orient ourselves to modern technology.’¹⁰⁷ However, it is important to be aware that he did restrict expanding contacts with the West. Trade was not to be totally open and by the late 1990s he deemed imports to be detrimental to the economy: ‘we, above all, should fill our market with domestically produced goods, instead of importing them. It is necessary to produce what we do not have and, if there are opportunities inside the country, we should produce the goods which we are importing now.’¹⁰⁸

Lastly, it is relevant to mention President Karimov’s public concerns over transportation links. The topic is not entirely associated with equality; yet it slightly contradicted his otherwise autarkic outbursts. In 1999, Mr Karimov confessed publicly

¹⁰³ -Uzbek head stressed need to tackle Afghan issue, Access to Iranian Portø*BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, June 9 2000.

¹⁰⁴ -Karimov interview on CIS integrationø*TASS*, 14 April 1994.

¹⁰⁵ -Uzbek President Sums up 1998 Economic resultsø*BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 16 February 1999.

¹⁰⁶ -Uzbekistan President Islam Karimov and OPIC President Ruth Harkin Discussí ø*NBC*, 24 June 1996.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ It is also important to recall that Tashkent at the time was still facing the effects of the 1995 slump in commodity prices that had gravely affected the country’s balance of payments. For the quotation, see: -Uzbek leader against playing role of raw materials supplierø*BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 17 October 1999.

to his Ukrainian counterpart that he very much envied Ukraine's access to the sea¹⁰⁹ and therefore showed some concern for linking his country to organizations like GUAM (this topic will be better discussed in Chapter V): 'GUAM is an organization of states around the Black Sea. From the point of view of communications and routes we are eager to reach that region and the world market in general. Our joining GUAM will help us greatly in achieving that our goal.'¹¹⁰

Overall, President Karimov continued calling for a cautious type of engagement, focused mainly on relative gains and economic mercantilism. To a degree, he was also enthusiastic about building links with other countries in order to fulfil his ambitious 'civilized' programme for domestic development, thereby propounding three more roles: *voice for a non-militaristic Central Asia; mercantilist entrepreneur; and bridge to joining other markets.*

Defending the image of the Uzbek people and inculcating authentic spirituality

The repertoire of *defending the image of the Uzbek people and inculcating authentic spirituality* became more prominent in the late 1990s, as President Karimov held himself responsible for safeguarding the traditions of Uzbekistan and its image abroad: 'I think much about preserving the dignity of the Uzbek people, the Uzbek nation and keeping that dignity high, never bowing to anyone and carrying out an independent policy is my major duty as a leader, I think [sic].'¹¹¹ This call for prestige seems to have been partially aimed against Russian assertiveness, especially its pan-slavic manifestations: 'all these games around a so-called union of Belarus, Russia and Yugoslavia: everyone, even the uninitiated, has no difficulty in understanding that Mr Slobodan Milosevic is playing his own game.'¹¹²

It seems obvious though that the appeals to fomenting culture and spirituality conflate somewhat with his core premise of technocracy, i.e. of not blending politics with economics. However, he tackled this apparent contradiction by arguing that 'ideology' of authenticity is apolitical by necessity: 'as known, we rejected the false communist ideas which contradicted our national features and centuries-old traditions and customs. But, undoubtedly, one cannot allow a vacuum in the world of ideology; otherwise ideas absolutely alien to us and our aspirations will try to occupy that empty

¹⁰⁹ 'Uzbek President Interviewed on Visit to Ukraine Aboard Aircraft' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 10 October 1999.

¹¹⁰ 'Uzbek President Repeats Line on NATO, Kosovo' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 23 April 1999.

¹¹¹ 'We have to think about NATO Membership' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts* 29 April 1999.

¹¹² 'Uzbek head warns of Russian embroilment in the Balkans' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 15 April 1999.

ideological space.¹¹³ He expanded this idea of an ideological vacuum by arguing that ‘if there is ideology, there is a goal and there is a motivation. And then we can unite people (...) That is why this issue is the most pressing one. It is spring here now. Tomorrow summer will set in the Batken events of last year.’¹¹⁴ Batken was the location of the IMU incursions of August 1999 and so it was within the context of increased border insecurity that President Karimov asserted the need for greater national spirituality. In sum, the persistence of spirituality and its reinforced articulation gave a stronger emphasis to Mr Karimov’s roles of *protector of Uzbekistan’s great image* and *definer of Uzbek authenticity*.

III.3. Repertoires from 2002 to 2005

The aftermath of 11 September 2001 was a complex time period for Tashkent. The security challenges of the 1990s were certainly difficult to manage but, after 2001, Uzbekistan’s government was increasingly scrutinized by the international public sphere. President Karimov became widely recognized as one of the symbols of the war on terror and therewith a ‘target’ of the Bush Administration’s increased enthusiasm for democratization, especially after the Colour revolutions. However, of all possible challenges, nothing was as shattering to Mr Karimov’s public credibility as the Crisis of 13 May 2005.¹¹⁵ After an organized prison-break and popular protests in the Ferghana Valley city of Andijan, Uzbekistani security forces surrounded the local square and violently confronted the populace, resulting in the death of 187 people, according to government sources (Human Rights Watch adds a few ‘hundreds’ to that tragic number).

Unlike the 1990s, when he set the foundations of his role set, President Karimov was now increasingly on the defensive, especially with Washington. Yet, in spite of the changes in the international public sphere, Uzbekistani leadership maintained its core rhetorical repertoires, adapting them only slightly to the time: (1) *preservation of security for the sake of controlling development and stability and avoiding revolution*; (2) *genuine independence and pursuit of international relations on an*

¹¹³ ‘Uzbek head answers newspaper questions on national ideology, religion, policy’ *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 8 June 2000.

¹¹⁴ ‘President Karimov calls for ðwell-defined national ideology’ *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 6 April 2000.

¹¹⁵ Depictions of the Andijan uprising are available in some sources. For different perspectives, see Shirin Akiner (2005) and Galima Bukharbaeva (2005) accounts as well as the following reports: ‘Uzbekistan: The Andijon Uprising’ *Crisis Group*, 25 May 2005, available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/central-asia/uzbekistan/B038-uzbekistan-the-andijon-uprising.aspx>, accessed April 2010; and ‘Preliminary findings on the events in Andijan, Uzbekistan, 13 May 2005’ *OSCE*, 20 June 2005, available via <http://www.osce.org/odihr/15653>, accessed April 2010.

equal basis; (3) defending the image of the Uzbek people and inculcating authentic spirituality. This means then that the roles did not change; merely that discontinuity instigated a gradual shift in rhetoric: from *provider of stability* to *protector of Uzbekistan's image and definer of authenticity*.

Preservation of security for the sake of controlling development, ensuring stability and avoiding revolution

President Karimov increased his democratic rhetoric throughout the period, although he described reform as an end rather than a process. This meant that he did not actually forsake authoritarian technocracy and thus concede to immediate and total change. However, Mr Karimov frequently mentioned adopting a 'western' type of political system: 'we are trying to use the experience of Western countries [sic]. We are drawing closer to their standards.'¹¹⁶ Pro-democratic stances, though, have to be read with caution. While political matters related to reform were discussed more in this period than in others, they were still far from being the main subject matter. Democracy was simply depicted as a goal for the future: 'the priority in domestic policy is the liberalization of all spheres of life, which has great significance.'¹¹⁷ So, albeit democratic rhetoric, President Karimov persisted with gradualism and invoked the usual *adagio* of caution and control: 'I'm concerned about the people's problems. We used to have two slogans, if you remember: First, don't pull down your old home before building a new one. Do you remember this? Second, reform is not for the sake of it, but for people.'¹¹⁸ In short, stability and the ability to control the pace of events¹¹⁹ remained the key pillars of his rhetoric, and so the 'Colour Revolutions' became especially threatening.

In October 2003, Azerbaijan faced widespread protests over fraudulent presidential elections (D'Anieiri 2006: 339; Way 2008: 29). Soon after, deception and repression failed in Georgia, and large demonstrations in November 2003 led to the collapse of President Shevardnadze's regime. Then, almost a year later, discontent over forged presidential elections led to the Orange Revolution, culminating in the election of pro-western candidate Viktor Yushchenko. It is important to bear in mind that Western backed NGOs, along with Russian interference, played a key role in those

¹¹⁶ 'Uzbek President explains move to reduce his authority' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 24 April 2003.

¹¹⁷ 'Uzbek leader lashes out at rights bodies over criticism of neighbourhood system' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 7 December 2003.

¹¹⁸ 'Uzbek leader promises to tighten borders against illegal exports' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 20 September 2004.

¹¹⁹ 'Uzbek leader lashes out at rights bodies over criticism' *op. cit.*

outcomes, particularly in Ukraine (Kuzio 2005: 429-494; Tudoroiu 2007: 329). Kyrgyzstan was the last in this apparent wave of governmental changes, as regional elite dissatisfaction along with pressure from informal networks contributed to President Askar Akaev's ousting in February 2005 (Cummings & Ryabkov 2008: 249).

These challenges to stability were taken seriously by President Karimov, who in 2004 had no qualms in describing the potential dangers spawning from revolution:

We know that at all times revolutions are usually based on violence and bloodshed, and they are used as weapons to destroy everything created by the ancestors mercilessly. Dogmatism, no matter in what form it shows itself, be it religious dogmatism or communist dogmatism, they ignore everything, act against their own principles, and carry out their activities proceeding from a Bolshevik principle which says 'You are either with us or against us'. We are confident that it is impossible to export democracy and different models of open societies. It is also impossible to import or push through a universal project of state construction from outside.¹²⁰

By underlining the threats associated with political change, President Karimov revamped his credibility as an apolitical leader and provider of stability. Like before, he did not avoid the issue of authoritarianism and also defined pro-democratic discourses as another type of extremism: 'Uzbekistan has always been against all forms of radicalism. We in Uzbekistan have always been against it. Even now, we are irreconcilable fighters against fundamentalism, which has many forms. We are against religious fundamentalism, we are against Communist fundamentalism and, if you like, we are against *democratic fundamentalism*. We are for an evolutionary path of development.'¹²¹

With the times becoming clearly averse to Uzbekistan's regime, President Karimov did not conceal that he deserved his own token share of merit in a post-11 September world. Uzbekistan's leader professed that his regime had consistently warned the world about the problems sprouting from Afghanistan and the dangers of Islamic extremism: 'it was only then after the New York tragedies that people started to realize and say: Oops, but Karimov's words proved to be right.'¹²²

Obviously the apparent elimination of the Taliban threat between 2002 and 2005 – along with the death of Juma Namangoniy, in December 2001 – could have raised doubts about security remaining a pivotal concern. However, President Karimov rarely demonstrated optimism, especially after Uzbekistan was subjected to two

¹²⁰ -New Uzbek Parliament part of Democratic Nation-BuildingøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 29 January 2005.

¹²¹ -Uzbek leader stresses common interests with JapaneseøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 2 August 2002. Italics added.

¹²² -Uzbek Presidentø news conference on 26 AugustøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 27 August 2004.

terrorist attacks in March and July 2004. In the first incident, a series of planned attacks took place in Tashkent, but doubts remain about whom was responsible for the incidents. Tashkent, though, took the initiative and publicly blamed them on Islamic militants, namely the Hizb ut-Tahrir and another unknown Islamic group called Jamiyat (Islamov 2004). Thereafter, as fifteen individuals connected to those incidents were being trialled; the second event took place in June, when two bombers attacked the Israeli and American Embassies and killed Uzbekistani policemen.¹²³ These incidents were again portrayed as the results of extremism, although uncertainty remains about the origin and aims of the culprits.

The attacks empowered President Karimov's public concerns and he, once more, lambasted against the dangers of extremism: 'there are forces with evil intentions among neighbouring and distant countries. These forces are jealous of our peace, peaceful life and the hard work of building a new society, and they cast evil eyes on us in such a dangerous situation. They are not afraid of committing subversive and evil acts. The existence of such forces requires us to maintain our vigilance and boost our independence.'¹²⁴ He thus continued showing his public disdain for instability. Naturally after the Andijan Crisis, this authenticity rhetoric reached its peak and Mr Karimov did not hesitate in blaming the media and foreign encroachment for the insurgency.¹²⁵

Genuine independence and pursuit of international relations on an equal basis

Despite the complicated times, Uzbekistani leadership continued supporting engagement with the outside world: 'we are not arrogant. As president I am ready to warmly welcome any investor, a person who is capable of doing something, a businessman. I personally do not need it. You should understand that President Karimov does not need it personally. However, it is necessary for the country, our homeland, our people, our future, our children, to make our country prosperous and to make our future better than our present.'¹²⁶ Alongside this public show of support for trade and foreign direct investment, he confessed his disappointment toward the

¹²³ -Suicide bombers hit Uzbek Capital, leaving at least five deadø *Eurasianet.org*, 30 July 2001, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav073004.shtml>, accessed June 2010.

¹²⁴ -Uzbek leaderø independence speech urges vigilanceø *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 1 September 2005.

¹²⁵ For President Karimovø accusations, see -Uzbek defendant says foreign media supported Andijon plotø *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 28 September 2005.

¹²⁶ -Uzbek leader slams agricultural sector, says 40,000 jobs to goø *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 14 February 2004.

geographic isolation of Uzbekistan and also Tashkent's inability to develop alternative transportation routes.¹²⁷

Still, he seems always to have remained cautious about his country's international engagement, by not refraining from defending equality: "we are not second to anyone in the world" keeps appearing on the TV screen every day (...) We will not be second to anyone. We were not second in the times of Amir Temur Tamerlane, medieval conqueror and now the times of Amir Temur have come.'¹²⁸ In fact, no other event conveyed his public concern for genuine independence and equality than the international crisis brought by Andijan: 'they want to establish an international commission for an investigation and come to Uzbekistan in order to investigate whether it was an act of terror (...) Uzbekistan is a sovereign state; it has its own gates and door steps, also let us say it has its constitutional system, elected government and elected president. It is a whole state and how could a commission from outside come?'¹²⁹

On economic policy, President Karimov's mercantilist appeals collided with some concessions he had made about reform, particularly concerning the implementation of currency convertibility that had been ratified under the 'Declaration on the Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Framework between the USA and Republic of Uzbekistan'.¹³⁰ He therefore conceded that he was sceptical of the interests of Western companies and international organizations: 'if business trends were more favourable and Uzbekistan had these billions, primarily due to its own resources, and commercial opportunities were somehow more appropriate we would not need any credits in order to ensure the convertibility of our national currency. Since even today no one pledges to give us billions. They simply talk.'¹³¹ So, President Karimov praised those who were not necessarily following Western models like China: 'China has achieved a higher level in the field of computerization (...) this is the goal of China. It is not possible to live by growing and selling cotton. Do you know when I got fed up with a phrase "Hey look, it is fine with us?"'¹³²

¹²⁷ On isolation, see 'Uzbek leader urges greater ties with Malaysia' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 3 October 2005.

¹²⁸ 'Uzbek leader lashes out at imports for sake of future generation' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 19 February 2003.

¹²⁹ 'Uzbek leader says no international probe into the Andijan crisis' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 25 May 2005.

¹³⁰ A degree of monetary reform was achieved in 2003, in spite of a number of tariffs being imposed between 2003 and 2004. See 'Declaration on the Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Framework Between the United States of America and the Republic of Uzbekistan' March 2002, available at, <http://www.fas.org/terrorism/at/docs/2002/US-UzbekPartnership.htm>, accessed September 2010.

¹³¹ 'Uzbek president promises convertibility' *op. cit.*

¹³² 'Uzbek leader slams agricultural sector' *op. cit.*

President Karimov gradually centred his rhetoric on authentic Uzbek culture and mentality. By the end of 2005, he was particularly adamant in differentiating his country from an intrusive west: 'English intelligence officer said in his time that the East is the East and the West is the West. I will not go into details but he said something to the effect that the West and the East would never come together. It was said back in the 19th century.'¹³³ He seems to have justified these distinctions by the fact that he was not treated equally (see discussion above): 'for how long will we be a backward country? I would like to repeat, as president, as leader I have set a goal before me. We have never been second to anyone and we will not be second to anyone.'¹³⁴ He even criticized the OSCE for being badly adapted to Uzbekistan's unique cultural circumstances: 'I must say one more thing. Uzbekistan is in Asia and let everyone remember this. We are members of not only the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, but we are members of Islamic states' organizations as well (...) We are also Muslims and 85 per cent of our population is Hanafite Muslim (...) you are forgetting, for example, take Ukraine, it is in Europe, or Georgia, it is also in Europe. Where is Uzbekistan? Look at the map. Is Uzbekistan, the city of Tashkent, not the gate of the East?'¹³⁵

All in all, it would seem that between 2002 and 2005, President Karimov altered some of his cautious welcoming of the West by evincing disenchantment and greater apprehension. Based on Uzbekistan's supposed exceptionality, he justified the use of condescending rhetoric toward the West, especially during the Colour revolutions: 'I doubt that a repetition of the Ukrainian or Georgian scenario would be possible in Uzbekistan (...) The citizens themselves would not want this, and that is much more important.'¹³⁶

III.4. Repertoires from 2006 to 2008

From 2006 to 2008, security and stability continued to be one of the key elements of President Karimov's rhetorical repertoires. The period also saw a transformation of the manner in which those concepts were articulated, as President Karimov switched his rhetoric from technocratic stability to cultural authenticity. In other words, he

¹³³ -New Uzbek Parliament of Democraticí ø op. cit.

¹³⁴ -Uzbek leader says God saved Uzbekistan during recent terror attacksø *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 7 April 2004.

¹³⁵ -Uzbek leader says no international probe into the Andijan crisisø op. cit.

¹³⁶ -Uzbek president issues robust defence of electionsø *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 27 December 2004.

recreated his role of guardian of Uzbek authenticity by securitizing it; a transformation that was not entirely novel, inasmuch as it was the continuation of a trend that had become more prominent in late 2003 and that reached a peak after the Andijan crisis. Nevertheless, the shift was short-lived. While world financial markets collapsed in 2008, President Karimov began refocusing on economic stability, much like he had done throughout his whole tenure in office. He even published a book in 2008, propagating his economic recipes and how Uzbekistan had managed to avoid the world-wide recession. Another topic that became more prominent was Central Asia's ecosystem, particularly the issue of water. As described below, President Karimov underlined that hydrological resources could neither be side-lined nor forgotten in regional politics.

Overall, the repertoires themselves did not change substantially. Instead two themes focusing more on cultural authenticity became prominent: (1) *defending the image of the Uzbek people for the sake of stability and development*; (2) *genuine independence and pursuit of international relations on an equal basis*.

Defending the image of the Uzbek people for the sake of stability and development

Throughout much of this period President Karimov sidelined some of his usual technocratic or apolitical slogans and focused more on Uzbek 'spirituality': 'if we wish to achieve our great goals, above all, we should focus on spirituality. Spirituality and again spirituality [sic]. And from this point of view, we should be vigilant and watchful.'¹³⁷ This public appeal was now presented as a securitized precondition to all other objectives, such as preserving stability and allowing for economic development. However, President Karimov was careful in underlining that he himself had not changed: 'I have remained the same as I was in 1991. And I think that all of you understand well that those who voted for me took into consideration exactly this [fact], that is, the path which we have started will never end.'¹³⁸

The stronger focus on Uzbek 'spirituality' throughout the period raises doubts about the consistency of his rhetoric. For instance, unlike in the immediate post-independence period, in which President Karimov coined instability as the result of social-economic crises (see previous discussions), by 2007 he described it as the product of dangerous ideologies: 'first of all, we should fight underlying causes for and the foundation on which terrorism stands. And I am sure that the terrorist ideology is sometimes produced on an assembly line. In this case, Hezb-e Tahrir [sic] is an

¹³⁷ -Uzbek leader warns of foreign influence at his Cabinet speechøBBC Worldwide Monitoring, 31 August 2007.

¹³⁸ -President delivers inauguration speechøBBC Worldwide Monitoring, 16 January 2008.

ideological basis for international terrorism.’ The argument of course is not entirely new, since in the 1990s he had already called for developing Uzbek authenticity (see previous discussion). The difference though resides in the rhetorical emphasis:

We attach special significance to this [education] in Uzbekistan (...) be aware of your roots, know your history, nation and be proud of your history and belonging to this nation. All this education is not only for us to occupy a worthy place in the international community in the 21st century (...) but also in order to wean young people off the ground where they [religious movements] can infect young people with terrorism, fanaticism and other ‘-ism’s [sic] which are equally unacceptable for us.¹³⁹

To clarify the connection between Uzbekistan’s authentic culture and security, President Karimov discussed systematically how he felt the former sprout from external threats: ‘we are living in a very complicated world. Somebody wants to defeat us. If they want to defeat us, how will they do this? First of all, they will destroy the economy. Last year you saw the [Andijon] events (...) An information war against us started in the world, humiliating us and saying that there are problems here and there. This was aimed at tarnishing our reputation.’¹⁴⁰ Obviously, the importance of reputation is very much related to Mr Karimov’s basic role of protecting Uzbekistan’s prestige. Therefore, he argues for citizens to be aware of ‘foreign centres, [that are] taking the advantage of ideological vacuum in society.’¹⁴¹

Indeed, the late 2004 trend of differentiating Uzbekistan from the West continued: ‘your values are not acceptable to us because 85 percent of the Uzbek population is Muslim.’¹⁴² Moreover, Uzbekistan’s so-called ancestors were given public prominence, particularly Amir Timur, whom he idealized as an ideal statesman.¹⁴³ The West, in contrast, was portrayed as a false beacon of democracy, since the tolerance it propagated was apparently fake: ‘they should not only look at the countries, which are stepping onto the new path of democracy, with evil eyes, but, if they really consider themselves as democrats, they should help and support us, if you like.’¹⁴⁴

By 2008, though, technocracy seems to have regained its former prominence in President Karimov’s rhetoric. Uzbekistan’s leader focused again on the issue fomenting economic growth and establishing a democratic society, such as in December 2008,

¹³⁹ ‘Kyrgyz president urges closer ties with Uzbekistan, end to isolation’ *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 7 March 2008.

¹⁴⁰ ‘Uzbek leader outlines tasks for 2006’ *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 12 February 2006.

¹⁴¹ ‘Uzbek leader warns of foreign influence’ *op. cit.*

¹⁴² ‘Uzbek president accuses West of waging information war against ex-Soviet Nation’ *Associated Press Worldstream*, 20 March 2006.

¹⁴³ See President Karimov’s references to Amir Timur in ‘Uzbek leader’s speech to eastern Fargona region’s officials’ *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 23 October 2006.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Uzbek leader urges European countries not to teach democracy’ *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 8 December 2006.

when he praised the resilience of Uzbekistan's economy and the model applied since the beginning: 'during the process of transition from the administrative-command system to the market system of management, we chose an evolutionary approach and the path of carrying out reforms step by step, being guided by a vital concept that one should not destroy the old house until he builds a new one.'¹⁴⁵

Naturally it is impossible to ignore the context behind President Karimov's assertions. On one hand, the recession brought by the sub-prime crisis spread across financial markets and affected the world economy, particularly the West and, on the other hand, Uzbekistan's relationship with the United States improved. In January 2008, Admiral William Fallon of US Central Command visited Tashkent to discuss a new supply route for NATO troops.¹⁴⁶ Mr Karimov then visited Bucharest in April 2008 to participate in a NATO summit,¹⁴⁷ and, soon after, the EU removed part of its sanctions.¹⁴⁸ Consequently, President Karimov's rhetoric is linked to the changes in the international public sphere – an issue that is better addressed in the narratives of the following Chapters.

Genuine independence and pursuit of international relations on an equal basis

The emphasis on authenticity throughout most of the period did not, however, change President Karimov's repertoires on international relations. He continued to argue for participating in external affairs:

we consider as another important factor to live in harmony with the world community while implementing all our good hopes and aspirations, as well as vital plans; to further develop friendship and mutually beneficial relations with all our near and far neighbours; and to gain deserved prestige and trust in the international arena. We will not spare our efforts to expand all-round practical relations with our foreign partners who have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with us and expressed trust in our nation's potential and future. In this regard, we consider as our priority task to develop relations that meet mutual interests, to serve for maintaining peace and stability in our region and the world as a whole.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ -Uzbek leader says economy protected from financial crisisøBBC Worldwide Monitoring, 6 December 2008.

¹⁴⁶ -Another Step Toward RapprochementøEurasianet.org, 23 January 2008, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav012308b.shtml>, accessed June 2010.

¹⁴⁷ -Uzbek President Calls for Resumption of Peace TalksøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 3 April 2008.

¹⁴⁸ -EU eases Uzbek sanctions despite reporter's jailingøBBC Monitoring World Media, 15 October 2008.

¹⁴⁹ -Uzbek leader independence speech lists foreign policy prioritiesøBBC Worldwide Monitoring, 1 September 2008.

In spite of the good-will, topics related to self-sufficiency and defence autonomy continued being iterated: ‘who is respected in the world? The world respects people, nation or a state which trusts in its own strength, capacities and power and which is able to demonstrate them. It respects people or nation which is prepared to protect and feed itself, to build its future and to pursue its comprehensive independent policy without being inferior and bending its head to anyone.’¹⁵⁰

Mitigating dependency was made explicit in President Karimov’s appeals for attaining energy self-sufficiency,¹⁵¹ and increasing Uzbekistan’s gold reserves.¹⁵² With the economic crisis expanding in 2008, Mr Karimov legitimated his mercantilist and protectionist policies by underlining that Uzbekistan had avoided recession: ‘we should note that it is not difficult to see and observe that many countries’ not well-thought-out [sic] policy towards external debt has made their economies weak, dependent on external factors, and unprotected from dangerous situations.’¹⁵³

Besides international political economy, President Karimov boosted his non-militaristic status by making frequent allusions to violence escalating in Afghanistan: ‘the dynamics of the development of the situation in Afghanistan show, with increasingly more obviousness [sic], that by using armed forces and military means as well as increasing militarization alone, it is impossible to resolve the problem of Afghanistan.’¹⁵⁴ Subsequently, in April 2008, at the NATO Bucharest Summit, President Karimov argued for an alternative. He put forth his previous 1990s suggestion of having each of Afghanistan’s neighbours -alongside Russia, the United States and now NATO - tackle insecurity: ‘taking into consideration the contemporary realities, it would be necessary to transform the contact group which operated until 2001 from 6+2 into 6+3 bearing in mind the compulsory participation of the NATO representation in this negotiation process.’¹⁵⁵

Lastly, it is perhaps relevant to mention President Karimov’s greater public concern with environmental issues. Although this is not specifically connected to international equality, it had rhetorical repercussions in regional politics. As Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan became more assertive in their wish to develop hydroelectricity (Weinthal 2006: 11), Mr Karimov voiced his strong scepticism toward Dushanbe’s plans

¹⁵⁰ -Uzbek leader says all work to focus on raising life standardsø op. cit.

¹⁵¹ On autarky, see -Uzbek leader warns of foreign influence at his Cabinet speechø op. cit.

¹⁵² On gold reserves, see President Karimov’s declarations in -Uzbek leader says Afghan situation has extremely negative impact on securityø *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 8 October 2008.

¹⁵³ -Uzbek leader says economy protected from financial crisisø op. cit.

¹⁵⁴ -Uzbek leader voices concern over Afghan securityø *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 28 August 2008.

¹⁵⁵ -President attends Partnership for Peace NATO summitø *Uzreport.com*, 4 April 2008.

for constructing the Roghun Dam.¹⁵⁶ He demanded that they should first obtain international approval¹⁵⁷ and underlined the negative consequences of environmental degradation in the Aral Sea.¹⁵⁸ So, the relevance given to environmental issues and the way in which Uzbekistan sought to guarantee an eco-friendly Central Asia shaped the role of *protector of Central Asia's environment*.¹⁵⁹

III.5. Repertoires from 2009 to 2010

The smaller sample of statements for this period means that it is harder to make an overall sketch of President Karimov's rhetoric. The complex blend of technocracy and Uzbek authenticity was still evident, thereby making it difficult to isolate the main roles. Mr Karimov was still having difficulties in ascertaining public credibility, leading inevitably to a conundrum: were Uzbekistan's economic achievements capable of being generalized under a so-called 'civilized' status among the world's powers, or was Uzbekistan's model of development designed to shelter its culture and prevent it from being compared to others? The question remained unanswered and so the friction within this complicated repertoire persisted in the years to come.

Defending the image of the Uzbek people for the sake of stability and development

The difficulty of understanding the predominant rhetorical theme throughout this short period derives in part from Uzbekistan's improved relationship with the United States and how this clashed with the appeals for cultural differentiation. At the time, President Karimov praised Washington and its influence: 'we learnt from the experience of the USA, when we set up the Senate, gave its name and elected 100 people to its membership (...). I think we must study and familiarize ourselves with these issues and apply them in our country.'¹⁶⁰ Lauding the United States evinces how Uzbekistani leadership revamped the topic of political reform. For instance, in November 2010,

¹⁵⁶ Once Moscow abandoned a hydroelectricity project in Tajikistan, President Rahmon announced in July 2007 that Tajikistan would build the plant by its own means. See 'Backgrounder: Tajikistan cancels giant Russian dam project' *BBC Monitoring Research*, 11 September 2007.

¹⁵⁷ 'Uzbek leader calls for coordinating water projects in Central Asia' *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 23 April 2008.

¹⁵⁸ 'President addresses participants of international conference on Aral' *Uzreport.com*, 13 March 2008.

¹⁵⁹ The environment was given further importance when the *O'zbekiston ekologik harakati* (Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan) was created in 2008 and allocated fifteen seats in Parliament (Tynan 2009). However, this was not the first time that green politics were relevant. Already in President Karimov's 1992 book, the disastrous Soviet legacy to the Aral Sea was described. Still, between 1992 and 2007, the issue had barely been mentioned in the public sphere.

¹⁶⁰ 'Uzbek leader says stability in region depends on Afghanistan' *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 28 January 2010.

President Karimov delivered a 12,000 word speech to Parliament, detailing new constitutional reforms: 'it is necessary to draft and adopt the legislative acts that after the example of the developed democratic countries stipulate establishment of legal mechanisms (...) The delegation of relevant authorities to the bodies of justice (...) shall permit to create an effective mechanism of checks and balances in the system of law-enforcement and supervisory bodies of the country, which ensures observance of law and rule of law in the course of their work [sic].'¹⁶¹ In the latter statement, no other reference to the American political system is clearer than the allusion to its checks and balances. Even in 2009, during parliamentary elections, President Karimov praised the democratic robustness of Uzbekistan's system.¹⁶²

It would seem that President Karimov's greater involvement with the United States triggered a gradual change in rhetoric (see above). However, the steady transformation was not novel in the argument, merely in the emphasis, insofar as the state remained the main supervisor of change.

As the economic crisis gained momentum, President Karimov explained that Uzbekistan had escaped recession because of the model of gradual transition it had implemented since independence: 'life experience has proved on more than one occasion that no-one and nothing can replace the regulation of economic and financial relations, the use of state's role in choosing priorities to find a way out of crisis situations, the role of the state that presents the interests of the majority of the population, and the conduct of strong social policy and long-term national strategy [sic].'¹⁶³ Moreover, President Karimov continued rejecting any sort of shock therapy and alluded to the growing success of China's cautious approach: 'why am I comparing the Chinese and Uzbek models? Because they are similar in many ways.'¹⁶⁴

On the other hand, President Karimov also claimed that he was propounding Uzbekistan's exceptionality and spirituality: 'naturally, we all respond to this question that on the focus of our aspirations there lays a dream to bring up our children physically and spiritually healthy, being inferior in nothing and to no one, see their happiness and prosperous future. Indeed, isn't it the core essence of our life?'¹⁶⁵ He continued, therefore, describing a number of threats to Uzbekistan's way of life: 'various attacks are ever gaining strength aimed against national identity, centuries-old values of our people, and mercenary aspirations are being manifested to secure the

¹⁶¹ -Address by President Karimov at the joint session of Legislative Chamber and Senate *UzReport.com*, 15 November 2010.

¹⁶² -Uzbekistan marks constitution day, President addresses the nation *Uzreport.com*, 8 December 2009.

¹⁶³ -One should not fetish market relations *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 22 May 2009.

¹⁶⁴ -Leader says living standards rising in Uzbekistan *op. cit.*

¹⁶⁵ -Uzbekistan marks constitution day, President addresses the nation *Uzreport.com*, 8 December 2009.

minds and souls of our youth, and certainly, all these impel us to greater vigilance.¹⁶⁶ As will be discussed below, reconciling cultural authenticity with technocracy is difficult - if not impossible, thereby leading to intra-role conflict.

Genuine independence and pursuit of international relations on an equal footing

President Karimov's notions of defending equality, as in all the other periods, were not subject to any degree of change: 'the reason for this is the fact that we have never been inferior to anyone in anything, and undoubtedly, shall be second to none in securing our cherished goal to build a free, independent and prosperous life, inshallah.'¹⁶⁷ Equality correlated with a mercantilist outlook, focused on genuine independence (non dependence), obtaining technology and exporting manufactured goods.¹⁶⁸

Other pervasive themes were non-interventionism and non-militarism. As concerns the former, the 'Kyrgyz Revolution' of 2010 led to a response from President Karimov, who declared that he would not interfere in his neighbour's affairs,¹⁶⁹ even as the violence targeted Uzbek minorities in Kyrgyzstan's south. Nevertheless, he made a surprising appeal at the UN Millennium Goals Summit for the Kyrgyz events to be subject to international inquiry;¹⁷⁰ in effect contradicting his claim for respecting Uzbekistani sovereignty during the Andijan Crisis.

Lastly, non-militarism, became especially connected to Afghanistan and Russian policy for Central Asia (the latter topic is developed in Chapter IV), in that President Karimov continued declaring Uzbekistan's neutrality in Afghan conflicts¹⁷¹ and for the application of his multilateral 6+3 initiative.¹⁷² Indeed, amid the discussion on NATO withdrawal, President Karimov demonstrated some apprehension regarding the region's future.¹⁷³

III.6. Role coherence and intra-role conflict from 1989 to 2010

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ 'Leader says living standards rising in Uzbekistan despite global crisis' op. cit.; and 'Global crisis negatively affects Uzbek exports' *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 14 February.

¹⁶⁹ 'Uzbek leader says no revenge to be allowed for Kyrgyz violence' *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 19 June 2010.

¹⁷⁰ 'Address by H.E. Mr. Islam Karimov, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, at the Plenary Session' 29 September 2010, available at: <http://www.gov.uz/en/press/politics/6612>, accessed: September 2010.

¹⁷¹ 'Uzbek leader says remained neutral during Afghan conflict' *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 19 December 2010.

¹⁷² 'Uzbek leader focuses on Afghan security during Russian counterpart's visit' *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 29 January 2009.

¹⁷³ 'Uzbek leader says remained neutral' op. cit.

The above analysis reveals that President Karimov publicly set for himself fifteen roles, all of which classified under three distinct group-types: technocracy; cultural authenticity; and prestige (see table 2 below).

The key role that appears in all group-types is *defender of Uzbekistan's international equality* (see table 2). It has a technocratic connotation by virtue of its economic focus, in that it calls for interaction based on relative gains. It is also associated with Uzbekistan's authentic culture, historical past and, by extension, its prestige, as made evident in the call the slogan 'Uzbekistan is second to no one'. Accordingly, no way of life has greater value and no historical narrative can be grander than Uzbekistan's own experience.

Seeker of genuine independence is not as all-encompassing as *defender of international equality*, but it has a number of repercussions on the technocratic and prestige group-types. On one hand, as the name suggests, it is explicitly associated with mitigating economic dependence and achieving defence autonomy. On the other hand, it purports to augmenting Uzbekistan's world status, given that being 'respected' or being among the 'civilized states' is only possible for those who defend their own borders, export manufactured goods and decrease their level of imports. So, the fact that *seeker of genuine independence* and *defender of international equality* overlap means that they have a number of ripple effects in President Karimov's role set. Before discussing in greater detail how these two pivotal roles are interconnected and whether they are coherent with each other, it is worth pointing out a few of the conflicts existing between and within the three group-types.

Table 2: Role Set Coherence ¹⁷⁴		
Technocratic	Cultural Authenticity	Prestige
<i>Expert on economic issues</i>		
<i>Protector of stability</i>		
<i>Defender of international equality</i>	<i>Defender of international equality</i>	<i>Defender of international equality</i>
<i>Seeker of genuine independence</i>		<i>Seeker of genuine independence</i>
<i>Technocratic leader</i>		
<i>Developer of Uzbekistan's economic future</i>		
<i>Undisputed authority</i>		
<i>Voice for a de—ideologized transition</i>		
<i>Mercantilist entrepreneur</i>		
<i>Bridge to joining other markets</i>		
<i>Voice for a non-militaristic Central Asia</i>	<i>Definer of Uzbek authenticity</i>	<i>Protector of Uzbekistan's great image</i>
		<i>Fomenter of defence autonomy in Central Asia</i>
		<i>Protector of Central Asia's environment</i>

Intra-role conflict between role group-types

Whilst technocratic-based roles pertain to the idea of achieving higher economic development, culturally authentic roles subsume the ideas of spirituality that were many times invoked to differentiate Uzbekistan from pernicious ideologies and even from the West (see above). In order to look at the degree of intra-role conflict between group-types, it would be best to revisit the dilemma President Karimov was facing after the Andijan crisis: were Uzbekistan's economic achievements capable of being generalized to a so-called 'civilized' status among the world's powers, or was Uzbekistan's model of development designed to shelter its culture, preventing it from being compared to others?

This dilemma pertains to the problem of role malintegration (see Chapter II), whereby technocratic themes hardly match counter-authenticity roles. In other words,

¹⁷⁴ While the classification is mostly self-explanatory, it is important to clarify why some roles were placed under certain group-types. Describing *Voice for a non-militaristic Central Asia* as technocratic has much to do with how President Karimov equates technocracy with non-political issues. When he propounded topics concerned with non-militarism, they were usually connected to avoiding greater militarization, which he argued deflected attention from economics and internal stability. On the other hand, *Fomenter of defence autonomy* and *Protector of Central Asia's environment* are categorized as part of the prestige group-type because President Karimov barely structured a programme on those subject-areas. For instance, while *defining authenticity* implied the deliberate appeal for 'Uzbekness' such as promoting family and local traditions, *fomenting defence autonomy* was a vague appeal with no actual practical implementation. Likewise for *Protector of Central Asia's Environment*, as no concrete action plan was delivered. Hence, the roles of *Fomenter of defence autonomy* and *Protector of Central Asia's environment* are largely slogans attached to President Karimov's prestige as Uzbekistan's head of state, rather than signifiers of an actual technocratic or authentic programme.

either President Karimov proclaimed himself to be a supposedly unbiased, apolitical leader (a man to do business with) or a cultural purifier. This role conflict evidently causes confusion regarding the source of Uzbekistan's prestige, meaning would it be its economic prowess or its cultural authenticity?

It is worth cautioning that portraying technocratic and cultural roles as contradictory is perhaps overstating the case, inasmuch as it may simply be a case of role competition, wherein different roles compete in time and space, but are not necessarily mutually exclusive (Backman 1970: 315). In fact, James Rosenau (1987: 57-72) argued that leaders who define various role scenarios are able to deal promptly with a variety of complex situations. Similarly, Cameron Thies (2009, 2001) proposed that leaders can endure critical situations if they define multiple roles for themselves. Therefore, the variety of roles expounded by President Karimov allowed for him to deal with role discontinuities (different sequential contexts which require disjointed roles – see Chapter II).

No other discontinuity was as prominent as the Andijan crisis, where his roles of *provider of stability*, *protector of Uzbekistan's image* and *undisputed authority* were all under intense scrutiny. In this case, both McCall and Simmons (1966: 95-99) and Harnisch's (2012: 56) discussions on role conflict offer insight (see Chapter II). They would agree that President Karimov coped with the rising difficulties by gradually changing the level of commitment from technocracy to authenticity. Moreover, the effects on public credibility and role conflict contributed to President Karimov altering his scope of interaction, as he became less reluctant to improve his relationships with China and Russia (the latter is better demonstrated in Chapter IV).

Despite the 'complementarity' existing between cultural authenticity and technocracy, they are still inherently contradictory. Clearly, in the early 1990s, he had defined himself mainly as a technocrat, but then, from 2002, his more defensive stance resulted in Uzbekistan's exceptional status and prestige becoming more prominent, which certainly allowed him to cope with credibility problems, but at the cost of revealing intra-role incoherency. So, role malintegration became more explicit, irrespective of the ability to cope with new challenges.

Intra-role conflict inside role group-types

The differences between groups are not as stark as table 2 suggests and, in fact, a degree of conflict can also be found within technocratic roles. This conflict derives from the general role ambiguity of *seeker of genuine independence* since, in one case, it constitutes the role of *mercantilist entrepreneur* and, in the other, it calls for obtaining

technology from abroad. President Karimov was quite vehement that Uzbekistan would not be able to develop if it remained outside international markets (see discussion above). Consequently, the contradiction is somewhat evident, as it is difficult to reconcile mercantilism with the appeals for *bridging other markets*.

Intra-role conflict between defender of Uzbekistani international equality and seeker of genuine independence

Defending equality and *seeking genuine independence* are more or less mutually dependent roles (see discussion above),¹⁷⁵ since apparently it is through genuine independence that Uzbekistan reaches equality, and it is also by professing that it is 'second to no one' that it becomes genuinely independent.

In spite of the assumed coherence between these two persistent roles, however, there is a degree of malintegration between the rhetoric of international equality and genuine independence. The argument itself is counterintuitive: *defender of equality* suggests an end; and *seeker of genuine independence* a process. In practice, demanding the simultaneous fulfilment of an end and a process is rather unfeasible. Either Uzbekistan is moving toward genuine independence, and so it is not yet equal among other 'civilized' states, or it is in fact an equal and therefore requires no further incremental progress. This problem inevitably contributed to public credibility problems, especially after the Andijan crisis. And yet, as shown above, the two loosely defined roles did allow President Karimov to adapt to discontinuities over time by alternating his commitment to different group-types.

Role coherence through self-reliance

In spite of President Karimov's role set seeming largely conflicting, it is consistent with the overall conception of self-reliance. Indeed, when delving into the intricacies of each role, many are mal-integrated, as is the case with his core roles of *defending Uzbekistan's equality* and *seeking genuine independence*. Still, the scepticism toward the international environment, the avoidance of dependency, the emphasis on economic development and the concern with authenticity, all reveal a public

¹⁷⁵ Both roles are more or less analogous with the Independence Ideaø (*Mustaqillik Maʼfurasi*), which was explicitly endorsed by President Karimov's regime in the mid-1990s (Muminov 2010: 148-149). However, given how his thesis is concerned with classifying general public themes rather than understanding their distinct local origin, the fact that President Karimov never publicly declared that he was following an ideology meant that *Mustaqillik* is not central to the discussion herein. This is not to say that *Mustaqillik* and Tashkent's Ideological Centre are irrelevant. The meaning of the word and its repercussions are certainly important to understanding the origins of political discourse in Uzbekistan. For more on *Mustaqillik*, see I. Muminov (2010) and Andrew March (2003, 2002).

commitment to autonomy and a strong reluctance to engage fully with the international public sphere. Although the justifications varied across time, President Karimov's roles were relatively constant. *Defending international equality* and *seeking genuine independence* never ceased to be invoked, and while the two may be questionable political programmes, Uzbekistan's president did not deviate substantially from his original positions. Perhaps even more interesting to observe is that throughout his nearly twenty years in office, he paid considerable attention to his credibility in the international public sphere, by constantly legitimating his roles (for legitimating acts in role theory, see Chapter II).

IV. The Uzbekistani-Russian Relationship 1991-2010

The near twenty-year relationship between Uzbekistan and Russia was characterized by distinct moments of cooperation and conflict. As concerns Moscow, various ideas on foreign policy were visible in a variety of statements and internal debates (Allison 2004: 283), which allows for a number of roles to be inferred. Yet, even during President Putin's era - as a number of more stable and longer-term goals were endorsed - it was unclear whether Moscow developed 'a regional strategy for Central Asia that would integrate Russian security, political, energy and economic interests' (Ibid). So, the relationship was fluid, open-ended and fundamentally political in that meanings and discontinuities all played an important part.

Despite a degree of ambiguity and intra-role conflict regarding foreign policy, Moscow did display distinct phases of external engagement that are more or less capable of being categorized: uncertainty in the early 1990s, when Russia divorced itself partially from the Soviet Union and looked more toward the West; the rise of the so-called Primakov doctrine in 1996, which sought to reignite interest for the 'near abroad', i.e. Eastern Europe and Central Asia; the Putin age after 2000, characterized by steadier leadership and clearer security and economic goals (Laruelle 2009: 29-32). For these reasons, Jean-François Thibault and Jacques Lévesque (1997: 20-22) argue that Moscow's roles are determined by three distinct and often conflicting roles, namely the Western outlook of the Kozyrev era, Eurasianism, and Neo-Communism. Their inference agrees more or less with Stephen White's (2000: 230) depiction of Russia's foreign policy debate in the 1990s - between those who supported foreign minister Kozyrev's honeymoon period with Washington and others who were sceptical toward engaging with the West. It also captures the economic recovery after 2000, in which Moscow pursued a number of economic projects, particularly in the energy market (Newnham 2011: 137; Baghat 2007: 163; Thompson 2004: 117). Increasing prosperity coincided with the beginning of President Putin's term in office. Moscow then consolidated a number of new concepts on foreign policy, namely: 'Europeanism'; 'securitisation' of both international terrorism and Chechen separatism; preserving 'autonomy'; 'normalizing relations with partners'; and constraining other 'great powers' (Sakwa 2004: 275-279). Evidently, it is worth insisting that all these pursuits were not always coincidental and, as Allison (2004: 283) pointedly observed, they hardly resulted in a univocal strategy. For instance, rapprochement with the 'near abroad' could sometimes be at odds with Moscow's own goals for monopolizing energy supplies in Eurasia (see below).

Naturally, some of those roles affected Russia's relationship with Uzbekistan. The two states were actually never able to settle a variety of disputes throughout their twenty-year relationship. President Karimov's self-reliant role set - focused on *seeking genuine independence, protecting stability, defending equality* and *Uzbekistan's image* – was never fully compatible with Moscow's paternalism regarding Central Asia, its security pursuits and even its occasional neglect of the region.

Overall, the central emplotting feature of the following narrative is President Karimov's persistent appeal for being an *equal among equals* which, alongside his role of *defending Uzbekistan's image*, barely ever fomented an environment conducive to consistent cooperation. As shown below, President Karimov began positioning his political career as a supporter of a relatively reformed Soviet Union, one in which *equality* among each Republic and *stability* was respected. Moscow, however, distanced itself initially from these appeals, which eventually contributed to reinforcing President Karimov's self-reliant roles. The friction, then, became more acute as Moscow debated a number of roles, some of which had imperialistic connotations, especially during the wars in Tajikistan and Afghanistan.¹⁷⁶ Still, not all was inter-role conflict, seeing as compatibility was also observable during the early Putin era, when Moscow adjusted to the region and boosted President Karimov's *prestige* and *technocratic* roles. Eventually, this led to gradual rapprochement, although, after 2006, Moscow's public ambitions in becoming an energy hub and security provider for the region collided with President Karimov's calls for *seeking genuine independence*. Role conflict thus became a predominant feature of the relationship after 2008, given that a number of unresolved issue-areas brought about discontinuity. The relationship was thus characterized by mutual inter-dependencies, in that events in Russia reinforced and constructed part of President Karimov's public repertoires, which, in turn, affected Moscow's policies for the region.

IV.1. The beginning 1989-1993: the ruble, debt, bilateralism and Uzbekistan's image

In the summer of 1993, President Karimov gave an interview in which he reflected upon the end of the Soviet Union. He confessed that a confederation of sovereign states would have been the natural result if events had not got out of control: 'everything had come down to a confederation being formed on the base of the union [sic]. But by the evolutionary path, without upheavals, in a civilized fashion [sic]. The Emergency

¹⁷⁶ See, for example, Roy Allison (2004: 280) for a brief depiction of Mr Chubais's fascination for a Russian-based liberal empire.

Committee [i.e. the August coup leaders] broke up everything and urged on destructive processes.¹⁷⁷ He also took the opportunity to pay a small homage to the former Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Uzbek SSR, Sharof Rashidov, whom he portrayed as an unfair target of the reformist fashions of the time.¹⁷⁸

These comments reveal the extent to which President Karimov had committed himself to stability and Mikhail Gorbachev's renewed Soviet Union.¹⁷⁹ Additionally, one cannot ignore how the statement evinces a sort of public grievance against both Moscow's reformists and how Uzbekistan had been depicted during the notorious 'Cotton Affair'.¹⁸⁰ The interview thus sketches well the way in which Mr Karimov's career skyrocketed during the end of the Soviet Union (see Chapter III). Both the circumstances of his appointment and his public qualms against *Perestroika* created the ideal setting for a career based on opposing accelerated change and *defending Uzbekistan's image and international equality*.

Reform and President Karimov's public position regarding the future of the Soviet Union

Before independence, President Karimov positioned his rhetoric in favour of curtailing Moscow's influence in Uzbekistan's internal affairs without, however, questioning the Soviet Union's economic stability. He therefore gradually invoked the slogan of *equality* among the Union's states,¹⁸¹ but did not endorse changes that could have ended in economic upheaval.

At the time of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*, one of Mr Gorbachev's more pressing concerns was to reform the USSR's 1977 constitution (White 1991: 139).¹⁸² This issue became relevant as the Baltic countries struggled for independence and especially after the Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian SSR declared sovereignty over the whole of the Soviet Union on 12 June 1990. Tashkent reciprocated a few days later, on 20 June, by proclaiming both its own sovereignty¹⁸³ and appealing for a decentralized

¹⁷⁷ -Uzbekistan; Karimov defends his policies against accusations of strong-arm tacticsøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 12 June 1993.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ For more on the issue of sovereignty and the renewed Soviet Union, see Mohira Suyarkulova (2011: 131-132), who argues that the governments in Central Asian favoured most of Mr Gorbachev's plans, but that they were not in favour of relinquishing sovereignty.

¹⁸⁰ See James Critchlow (1991) for an excellent account of the Cotton Affair and the main issues affecting the relationship between Moscow and Tashkent in the 1980s.

¹⁸¹ On President Karimov's interpretation of equality within a renewed Federation, see the following interview: -President of Uzbekistan interviewedøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 15 April 1991.

¹⁸² This was a highly contested issue at the time, especially after Mr Yeltsin declared Russia's sovereignty over the whole of the Soviet Union in June 1990. In any case, Lithuania had already declared independence the year before, soon followed by the remaining Baltic states.

¹⁸³ -Congress of CP of UzbekistanøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 13 December 1990.

union.¹⁸⁴ President Karimov, nevertheless, remained prudent in public, arguing that he was against breaking all formal ties with Moscow. Hence, he declared that Uzbekistan was not pursuing defence sovereignty and complete independence.¹⁸⁵ Also, unlike the trends spurning from the Caucasus (except for the Azerbaijan SSR) and the Baltic countries, he endorsed the referendum on a new political treaty, the results of which revealed that 93.7% of the Uzbek SSR's voter turnout was in favour of Mr Gorbachev's plans.¹⁸⁶

In August 1991, as events were apparently leading to a reformed union treaty, Mr Gorbachev went on holiday. However, Moscow's leading conservative faction then seized the opportunity and organized a coup. Uzbekistan's leader was, at the time, visiting India (Suyarkulova 2011: 144; Carlisle 1995b: 196); but, as the coup's failure became apparent, he returned to Tashkent and, along with his Kyrgyz counterpart, declared independence on 31 August 1991.

This claim to independence, while seeming to be a sudden shift, was in fact a coherent position, given the demise of the coup. President Karimov persisted with invoking the *protection of stability* and *technocratic leadership* (see Chapter III). So, the call for independence publicly differentiated Tashkent from the conservative backlash, but did not question his public commitment to Soviet Unity, so long as his country's sovereignty was respected (see Chapter III). Subsequently, he backed Mr Gorbachev after the coup and his renewed attempt to create a Union Treaty of Sovereign States (Suyarkulova 2011: 144).

Nonetheless, the political game faced discontinuity after President Boris Yeltsin's success in curtailing the coup (White 2000: 32). Russia's President, probably convinced that USSR was no longer feasible, supported independent Ukraine and refused to sign the new Union Treaty on 24 November. Soon after, he met with the Presidents of Ukraine and Belarus and designed a separate treaty agreement on 8 December, effectively creating the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). This turn of events was condemned by President Karimov. Indeed, President Yeltsin proposed a rapid and nationalist change, which confronted Mr Karimov's roles of *protector of stability* and *de-ideologized* leader. As a result, he declared that the

¹⁸⁴ -Second day's debate on Gorbachev's report, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 25 September 1989.

¹⁸⁵ -President of Uzbekistan interviewed, op. cit.

¹⁸⁶ In spite of the strong support for the Soviet Union and the narrative that subsequently came about that Central Asian Republics hoped to maintain the Soviet *status quo*, it is important to recall a number of President Karimov's statements favouring sovereignty (see discussion in Chapter III and IV). Also, the fact that the question in the referendum itself called for a -sovereign republic or one with -equal rights meant that Tashkent was especially committing itself to a reformed union (Suyarkulova 2011: 141-142), where equality was kept, as well as economic stability. So, the *status quo* was more nuanced than just an attempt at continuity.

creation of the CIS was a 'hot-headed decision' led by the three 'Slavic' Republics and which, as a result, could have contributed to 'balkanizing' the Soviet Union.¹⁸⁷ Retorts aside, the Soviet Union was effectively delegitimized after the creation of the CIS.

The need for bilateralism and the rhetoric of reform

With the end of the Soviet Union, President Karimov remained somewhat consistent with his previous roles, by simply switching his rhetoric on the Union to the CIS space. He campaigned for *protecting stability* and keeping the ruble zone.¹⁸⁸ These public commitments, however, brought about a degree of intra-role conflict. Given that he persistently declared the need for *defending Uzbekistan's equality*, it is difficult to reconcile economic integration between two different and unequal partners. Subsequently, the relations between Russia and Uzbekistan suffered, partially due to Tashkent's contradicting roles, but also because of Moscow's public unwillingness to commit to Eurasian schemes (Laruelle 2009: 30; Thibault & Levésque 1997: 20-22)

Evidence of President Karimov's calls for *defending equality* was made clear in his endorsement of bilateralism. In October 1991, both Presidents Yeltsin and Karimov ratified a barter agreement - the first bilateral treaty between the two newly independent Republics.¹⁸⁹ The two heads of state then met again in 1992 to prepare the legal basis of their relations, formalized under the 'Friendship Agreement' of 30 May.¹⁹⁰ In practice, the agreement downplayed the importance of the CIS as a binding multilateral framework. At the time, President Karimov admitted that '[the CIS] is a necessity and a mechanism acceptable for all independent states which helps to preserve the civilized relations and contacts between the CIS states and to go to long-term bilateral relations [sic].' According to President Karimov's own words, the CIS was downplayed as a sort of goodwill summit for promoting bilateral cooperation, rather than a strong multilateral body. Consequently, bilateralism would soon become his public *modus operandi*, seeing as it was perhaps the best way of *defending equality* without having it becoming diluted in a large organization led by Moscow.

¹⁸⁷ -Uzbekistan; Karimov defends his policies against accusations of strong-arm tactics op. cit.

¹⁸⁸ According to Michael Kaser (1997: 28-31), the pro-ruble policy may have been motivated by a wish to continue receiving the large subsidies of the Soviet era and even the free-ride on Russia's monetary expansion. Related also to the question of currency was the need of coordinating the Soviet Union's debt in the early 1990s. In fact, it was not just with currency that President Karimov was concerned, but also the problem of debt. In late 1991, Mr Karimov opposed signing an agreement with the Paris Club, which planned the partition of the Soviet Union's claims and debts. This problem was quickly solved, though, when Tashkent agreed that Moscow would service its external debt in exchange for a transfer of claims (Nadmitov: 7).

¹⁸⁹ Tashkent settled to supply cotton to Russia's textile industry in exchange for machinery.

¹⁹⁰ -Karimov's visit to Moscow; Friendship Treaty signed BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, June 1992.

However, *defending equality* was hardly compatible with preserving an economic union, i.e. *protecting the stability* of economic arrangements. As negotiations over the future gained momentum, reformists in Moscow opposed the type of economic linkages existing with the former Soviet Union. Personalities with growing influence in Moscow like Yegor Gaidar, Boris Fedorov, Anatoliy Chubais and Aleksandr Shokhin were all against maintaining the ruble zone (Dabrowski 1995: 25). Their concerns were, in part, political as most felt Russia's future lay in the West and not among its 'lagging' southern neighbours. Yet, besides their different visions, the reformists' roles also sanctioned a sudden transition to a market economy, a measure to which President Karimov was vehemently opposed. Basing himself on his credentials as both a *stabilizer* and *technocratic expert*, President Karimov campaigned for maintaining economic stability and not shaking the foundations of the system. He publicly opposed Yegor Gaidar, the father of Russia's 'shock therapy', accusing him of leading Russia into disarray and of dragging Soviet States into impoverishment.¹⁹¹

Eurasianists in Russia were at the time the minority and so the ruble zone gathered little public support. However, President Karimov appealed to this small segment of Russian society as well as to his own domestic constituency: 'there is much more to it [the ruble zone] than that. I would like to explain one simple thing, that is, to me exit from the rouble zone is not simply losing whatever economic links that we currently maintain with Russia (...) Among the people living in Uzbekistan are two million Russian-speakers. These are people who see Russia as their true homeland, and it only takes us to bring in our own currency for them to feel, quite simply, that they are being cut off from their homeland.'¹⁹²

The future of the economic union was in a state of flux, but events would soon appear to be on President Karimov's side after signing the 'Agreement on a Uniform Monetary System and Unified Money, Credit, and Currency Policy in the States Using the Ruble as a Legal Medium of Exchange' on 9 October 1992. President Yeltsin was paying heed to the calls of Eurasianists, and so the ruble would remain the legal means of exchange in the CIS. President Karimov showed also his public commitment to the new arrangement by lambasting against Kyrgyzstan when it decided to leave the monetary union in early 1993.¹⁹³

However, shortly after the agreement, President Yeltsin showed increasing uncertainty. Reformists in Moscow changed the ruble zone's policy in July 1993 and the

¹⁹¹ -'Speaking of Borders means breaking up Central Asia' Islam Karimov Speaks in an Interview with Foreign Journalists, *Official Kremlin News Broadcasts*, 15 May 1992.

¹⁹² -President Karimov on Independence Day; speaks on Russia's regional role, *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 17 September 1993.

¹⁹³ -Press Conference by CIS leaders on results of Moscow Meeting (President Hotel), *Official Kremlin News Broadcast*, 14 May 1993.

Russian Central bank unilaterally announced that notes printed before 1993 would no longer be legal tender, meaning they were ascribed as debts to be paid by Central Asian states (Hale 1994).

The decision seems to have had a strong public impact in Tashkent. Even as late as 2001, President Karimov reflected upon its repercussions and how it had threatened *stability*: ‘Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev [the President of Kazakhstan] and I were among those who were categorically against being pushed out of the rouble zone. If you remember, this happened in 1991-1993 when Russia introduced its new currency, they used to send their old banknotes and we did not know how to deal with them [sic]. You know even removing them from circulation is not a simple process, all these huge piles of currency and notes which have poisonous consequences [sic]. They gradually introduced their new currency and sent their old currency to us and we distributed them as salaries then they registered them as our debt. We objected and asked what they thought they were doing.’¹⁹⁴

In the end, it was simply not possible to merge President Karimov’s call for *economic stability* with *defending equality* - ambiguities that were then reflected in subsequent negotiations. Moscow demanded the IMF model, whilst its counterparts desired a one country one vote system (Dabrowski 1995: 20-21). President Yeltsin, though, seems to have been somewhat sensitive to the situation in Central Asia and backtracked again by proposing the creation of a Monetary and Economic Union in August 1993. President Karimov then adjusted his actions by authorizing national economic policy to be coordinated alongside Moscow.¹⁹⁵ However, he then refused transferring 40 tonnes of gold to Russia (Hale 1994: 149) and so no agreement was reached. Losing almost all macroeconomic sovereignty was perhaps too much given how much he had rested his public credibility on *defending equality* and *seeking* a degree of *genuine independence*.

The discontinuity, though, did bring new opportunities. Forsaking the ruble zone meant that President Karimov would no longer have to compromise on being the domestic *undisputed authority* and could thus become less constrained in propounding self-reliance.

¹⁹⁴ ‘No deadline set for US troops to leave Uzbekistan, president says’ *MoreøBBC Monitoring Central Asia*, 29 December 2001.

¹⁹⁵ ‘Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan to keep ruble with Russia’ *Agence France Presse*, 7 August 1993.

IV.2. Disentanglement to a degree (1994-1999): diverging concerns over Tajikistan and Afghanistan and protecting Uzbekistan's image

After the end of the ruble zone, Moscow and Tashkent strengthened their relations by signing several bilateral accords: the 1994 Strategic Agreement, a Trade Accord in 1998 and other legal treaties dealing with the 1992-1993 credits to Uzbekistan. Although a degree of bilateral cooperation existed, the number of treaties signed did not reflect any special level of public trust existing between the two parties. Indeed, by 1999 the relations of the two countries hardly deserved an optimistic appraisal.

President Karimov, once abandoning the ruble zone, publicly endorsed more self-reliance. The electoral successes of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's party in 1993 and then of the Communist party in December 1995 brought about a degree of public grievance from Tashkent, given their nationalist rhetoric.¹⁹⁶ Both parties conflicted overtly with President Karimov's *technocratic*-centred roles, based on *protecting stability* and *de-ideologized* politics and reinforced his role of *defender of Uzbekistan's great image*. Still, it would be the civil wars in Tajikistan and Afghanistan that unravelled a strong level of public distrust between the two countries, as President Karimov accused Moscow of conspiring against Uzbekistan's international *equality*.

The problem of Moscow's imperialist rhetoric

Despite rivalries and friction, Presidents Karimov and Yeltsin were not publicly willing to break relations throughout the whole period. Uzbekistan's leader actually appealed to Moscow. He called for the Russian government to become a more reliable partner and galvanize bilateral trade, which was entirely compatible with his role of *bridge to other markets* and voice for *de-ideologized transition*.¹⁹⁷ Indeed, Mr Yeltsin, whose foreign policy had now gradually adhered to the concept of engaging with Central Asia (Laruelle 2009: 31; Allison 2004: 281), travelled to Tashkent in October 1998. The official visit and President Yeltsin's proposal for a ten-year trade accord were portrayed by the press as an attempt to diminish tension.¹⁹⁸

Even though these efforts did not lead to rapprochement (see below), it is interesting to observe that President Karimov enjoyed lauding Mr Yeltsin's personal qualities. For instance, after signing the 1998 trade accord, Uzbekistan's President

¹⁹⁶ For more on Russian nationalism, see Marlene Laruelle (2009).

¹⁹⁷ "Russia risks losing Uzbek market, Karimov warns" *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 27 May 1994.

¹⁹⁸ As a matter of fact, in March 1994, a few months after being forced to print new currency, President Karimov visited Moscow and signed a bilateral strategic agreement. It was not particularly innovative, merely a commitment to not mutually targeting each other.

praised the Russian head of state for always being opposed to 'chauvinism' and grandiose 'imperialism'.¹⁹⁹ Moreover, he mentioned that he had personal respect for the Russian President, deriving from the latter's moderation.²⁰⁰ This was a resounding show of support for Mr Yeltsin who, curiously, at the time, arrived in what seemed to be an intoxicated state at Tashkent airport. Reporters revealed that Mr Karimov was even forced to prevent Russia's President from falling on the ground.²⁰¹

The show of respect was probably induced by President Yeltsin's reluctance to fully endorse Russia's growing nationalism,²⁰² which was compatible with Mr Karimov's role of *defender of Uzbekistan's image*. It is important to mention that, in the 1990s, President Karimov was visibly sceptical of his Russian counterpart, who had, during his presidential election, portrayed Russia's southern neighbours as backward (Laruelle 2009: 30). Such declarations along with uncomplimentary journalistic reports were frequently denounced by Mr Karimov.²⁰³ Evidently, Mr Yeltsin's dynamic style opposed Mr Karimov's *technocratic* approach to politics; yet as both the Communist and Liberal democratic parties gained influence in Moscow, Uzbekistan's leader became a stronger supporter of the Russian President, which allowed for boosting his roles of *protector of stability* and *undisputed authority*. After Mr Zhirinovskiy's electoral success in December 1993, President Karimov stated that 'chauvinistic sentiments are on the rise in Russia now. We should not like them to become predominant because they pose a certain threat to Uzbekistan.'²⁰⁴ Furthermore, when Gennady Zyuganov, the secretary of the Communist party, called Mr Yeltsin a drunken, President Karimov intervened on behalf of Russia's President: 'if Zyuganov calls his president an alcoholic, then what kind of order will there be in the state, just tell me that. He is your president, who was elected, as you like to boast, in a democratic way.'²⁰⁵

Furthermore, Russia's growing nationalistic pride was portrayed as a threat to Uzbekistan's *genuine independence* and *international equality*. For instance, Tashkent

¹⁹⁹ 'Uzbek President Hails Yeltsin's Visit' *Interfax Russia News*, 12 October 1998.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ 'Yeltsin ōunsteady on his feet ōn arrival in Uzbekistan' *Agence Presse France*, 11 October 1998

²⁰² For more on Russian nationalism, see Laruelle's (2009) excellent book. On the politics of Russia's Duma, see White (2000).

²⁰³ See for example 'Fourth Congress of People's deputies of the USSR Statement' *Official News Broadcasts*, 19 December 1990 and 'Uzbekistan; Karimov defends his policies against accusations of strong-arm tactics' *op. cit.*

²⁰⁴ Mr Karimov's intense dislike for Russia's new parties was made clear when he stated that he would not visit Russia if he were invited by Mr Zyuganov, the leader of Russia's communist party. President Karimov further polarized the situation by bluntly stating that the 'Russia of President Boris Yeltsin appeals to me but not the Russia of Zyuganov'. See 'Kazakh, Uzbek and Turkmen leaders on relations with Russia' *TASS*, 29 January 1994.

²⁰⁵ 'Uzbek head in airport interview before leaving for Kazakh Summit ō full version' *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 20 February 1999.

criticized Foreign Minister Nikolay Kozyrev's suggestion of using force to protect ethnic Russians abroad and the Duma's decision to consider the *Belovezhskaya Puscha* agreements illegal.²⁰⁶ So, as the debate over Russian nationalism and imperialism persisted, President Yeltsin responded to the politicization of chauvinism by publicly dismissing the imperial aims of Russia in December 1997 and appealing for Uzbekistan's cooperation.²⁰⁷ Still, as shown below, these adjustments and small instances of role compatibility between the two leaders were not enough to ameliorate a number of other tense bilateral issue-areas that came under the public spotlight.

Russia and Uzbekistan's interventionist policies: clashes over Tajikistan and Afghanistan

At the surface level, everything would suggest that Moscow and Tashkent shared similar concerns over stability. According to President Karimov, the conflicts in Chechnya were linked to Tajikistan and Afghanistan and the growth of Islamic fundamentalism: 'after the events in Dagestan and in Russia in general, it has become obvious that there are common centres, which are powerful, have strong financial resources, and are extremely well organized (...) I am firmly convinced that the savage appearance of international terrorism is today taking cover behind religious concepts, sacred to many people.'²⁰⁸ Consequently, both Moscow and Tashkent were sometimes able to demonstrate public unity as the crises escalated,²⁰⁹ but full role compatibility was hindered by other parallel events, which increased bilateral friction.

Initially, with factional confrontations in Dushanbe escalating, Moscow and Tashkent became active in promoting the *Kulabi* and *Leninibadi* groups to power. President Karimov supported the popular front led by Sanjar Kenjayev (a Tajikistani national from the *Leninibadi* region) in fighting against the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) (Akiner 2001: 21; Jonson 2006). The war gained visibility in the international public sphere as twenty-four Russian border troops were killed in Tajikistan in July 1993, eventually inducing President Yeltsin to become more involved in the conflict and declare that Tajikistan's border would be regarded as Russia's border too (Neumann & Solodovnik 1996: 92). This was far from being compatible with President Karimov's

²⁰⁶ -Other reports; Yeltsin receives telegrams from CIS leaders condemning State Duma decisionøBBC *Summary of World Broadcasts*, 20 March 1996.

²⁰⁷ -Yeltsin voices concern at Uzbek stance on CISøBBC *Summary of World Broadcasts*, 1 January

²⁰⁸ -Uzbek President Vows to Defend Territory ōwith all available meansöøBBC *Worldwide Monitoring*, 20 October 1999.

²⁰⁹ For example, after the Tashkent bombings of February 1999, Mr Yeltsin was quick to telephone Mr Karimov and offer his sympathies. On the other hand, when Russia's actions in Chechnya were increasingly condemned in the West, President Karimov highlighted American hypocrisy toward the Andrei Babitskiy affair - a Russian journalist who was imprisoned by Russian military forces.

public positions, seeing as he called for *seeking genuine independence* and *defending equality* for both Uzbekistan and its neighbours. In fact, just a few months earlier, he had stated to be personally against Central Asian countries requiring external assistance to defend themselves: 'let me just stress that Tajikistan should not expect somebody else to come and defend it. Every people must defend themselves and every state if it is a sovereign and independent state.'²¹⁰ President Karimov argued for demilitarizing the region and thus objected to Russian border troops remaining on the ground (see Chapter III).

Once violence in Tajikistan mitigated in 1994, Uzbekistani and Russian authorities managed to exclude the UTO from Tajikistan's late November elections. The outcome, however, was not favourable to Tashkent given that the *leninibadi* candidate they supported lost, and Emomalii Rahmon, a *kulabi*, won (Neumann & Solodovnik 1996: 94). Power sharing was still a contested issue and a compromise was settled in Moscow in April 1997, whereby President Rahmon agreed to allocate thirty per cent of his government to members of the UTO. Despite the successful negotiation, Tashkent refused to be one of the guarantors of the agreement, even though it did not publicly divulge the reasons for the decision.²¹¹ As an initial response to this settlement, Tashkent removed its own peacekeeping force from Tajikistan in November 1998 and clarified its position by demanding Russia to do the same: 'we used to have our battalion in Tajikistan. Currently a reconciliation process is underway in Tajikistan. All the members of the Tajik opposition in Afghanistan have returned. So now they should come to an agreement, conduct elections and restore peace. Why, now, should our battalion stay there?'²¹² As President Karimov's appeals were ignored, and as a subsequent military intervention resulted in failure,²¹³ he accused Russian intelligence of fomenting hostilities between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.²¹⁴

²¹⁰ -Press Conference by CIS heads of Stateø*Official Kremlin News Broadcast*, 22 January 1993.

²¹¹ The more probable reason is that President Karimov was not pleased with the fact that the *leninbadis* had been kept out of the negotiations. Additionally, Uzbekistani authorities were concerned with Mirzo Ziyoo's nomination. The latter was a former member of UTO and closely connected to Juma Namangoni and Tohir Yo'ddosh, the leaders of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) (Horsman 1999: 41). See also Akbarzadeh (2005: 41) and Jonson (2006: 113) for more on the IMU.

²¹² -Refile Uzbek head: 'We have to think about NATO membership'ø*BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 1 May 1999.

²¹³ Tashkent did not confirm its involvement, but everything suggests that it connived with Tajik Colonel Khudoberdiyev's incursion into Tajikistan in 1998. The latter was able to temporarily seize Khujand in the North of Tajikistan, but then was forced to flee as President Rahmon retaliated (Fairbanks et al. 2001: 49).

²¹⁴ Relations between Presidents Rahmon and Karimov were becoming increasingly confrontational, with the former accusing Uzbekistan's government of orchestrating an assassination attempt, increasing instability and protecting Colonel Khudoberdiyev (Horsman 1999: 39-40). In contrast, President Karimov ignored any kind of public diplomacy and responded harshly to his counterpart's accusations: 'Emomali Rahmonov was saying absurd things. His words were hard but he was uttering them without thinking

Role incompatibility also became more visible once the civil war in Afghanistan escalated. Reports at the time showed both sides clashing over whom to support. Initially, Tashkent assisted General Rashid Dostum, who controlled the *Junbesh-i Milli-yi Islami* (National Islamic Movement) in Afghanistan's north (Rubin 2002: 275-276).²¹⁵ Alternatively, President Yeltsin supported his Afghan counterpart, Burhanuddin Rabbani. This lack of convergence eventually came out in 1994, when the Russian press speculated about Tashkent's decision to hinder Russian supplies from reaching Mr Rabbani's frail government in Kabul.²¹⁶

It would seem that, by the end of 1998, President Karimov was publicly sceptical of Russia's roles for the region. As President Rahmon consolidated power, Uzbekistani leadership saw its own factions lose influence and, according to some elements in the Russian press, this was the reason for Tashkent not renewing the Collective Security Treaty (CST) in 1999.²¹⁷ Nevertheless, President Karimov made it publicly clear that his position concerning CST resulted from Moscow not coming to Uzbekistan's aid once the Taliban were able to control Afghanistan's north: 'we were witnesses of those times when twice the Taleban [sic], the most militant so far, to put it mildly, section of the groups fighting in Afghanistan, captured the north of Afghanistan and were virtually on the bridge, the railway bridge linking, via the Amudarya River, the territories of Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. Who came to help us? (...) We asked simply for missiles for the volley fire installations so as to cut the bridge off in case those in the north went out on the bridge in a state of euphoria. We were told that tomorrow a special train would set off. I am telling from the source, I was told by Mr Viktor Chernomyrdin who spoke to me on the telephone on the Sunday. And we kept on waiting.'²¹⁸ Clearly, the way President Karimov depicted all those events reinforced his roles of *seeker of Uzbekistan's genuine independence and defender of equality*.

Increasing economic self-reliance

As the promise of the ruble zone faded (see above), President Karimov gradually embraced economic self-reliance, based essentially on his appeals for a type of

deeply. His words were fabricated and full of slander. See Karimov says Russian intelligence provoking Uzbek-Tajik friction op. cit.

²¹⁵ Even though *Junbesh* was able to gather considerable assistance from Russia and Turkey, Tashkent was Dostum's greatest benefactor, supplying him with arms, ammunition, spare parts, armoured personnel carriers, wheat, fuel and electricity, and also allowing him to cross into Uzbekistan and use Termez airport (Giustozzi 2009: 136).

²¹⁶ Russian fuel supplies to Rabbani opposed by Uzbekistan BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 18 July 1994.

²¹⁷ Discontent at CIS security treaty linked to relations with Tajikistan *Izvestia*, 4 February 1999.

²¹⁸ (Refile) Uzbek head tells Press in Kazakh Capital about Tashkent Blasts BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 21 February 1999.

mercantilist entrepreneurship and *seeking genuine independence*. After 1994, and especially during the Tajikistani peace negotiations, Uzbekistani officials rarely signed CIS agreements on border management, military training and economic cooperation. This was particularly evident as a customs union was discussed for the CIS.

In April 1994, Russia and Belarus took the first steps towards an economic union, which was then implemented in 1995 and soon joined by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Tashkent, though, refrained from participating (Lawson & Erickson 1999). Instead, President Karimov actually became one of the economic union's main critics, arguing that forced integration would hinder Uzbekistan's ability to diversify exporting partners.²¹⁹

Economic rhetoric aside, President Karimov also claimed that a customs union would undermine Uzbekistan's *international equality*.²²⁰ Indeed, it would seem that Uzbekistan's President was wary of Russia's actions within the CIS and questioned whether Moscow was sincerely determined in pursuing economic integration. Several incidents at the time would seem to confirm his public position, seeing as Russian businesses dumped goods into Belarusian markets and Moscow's economic power forced Kazakhstan to tackle debilitating terms-of-trade (Ibid). Subsequently, President Karimov remained consistent with his role of *seeker of genuine independence* and lambasted against the creation of a Customs Union in March 1999. He suggested, instead, that all CIS member-states should seek to implement a free trade zone.²²¹

Unresolved issue-areas: Debts and TAPO

Besides disparaging concerns over regional influence, nationalism and trade, a number of important issues remained unresolved throughout the 1990s, which effectively contributed to bilateral friction. Indeed, most of these topics challenged President Karimov's own roles of *defending equality*, *seeking genuine independence* and pursuing *mercantilism*. One such problem was the financial debt Uzbekistan accumulated in the early 1990s, when the ruble zone was being negotiated. The subject was solved initially in March 1997, when Uzbekistani negotiators agreed to have their debt restructured and pay a total of 500.6 million dollars (Islamov 2001: 12). Yet, the promise all but waned once Uzbekistan's parliament declared the agreement illegal in

²¹⁹ -Uzbek president criticizes formation of CIS unionsø *Interfax News Agency*, 22 October 1997.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ -Uzbek President Criticizes latest Customs Union Summitø *Interfax News Agency*, 2 March 1999. In spite of this seeming a political ploy, appealing for a free trade zone was not entirely duplicitous. From an economic point of view, a free trade area, unlike a customs union, does not require tariff homogenization and so would not harm President Karimov's claim for alternative trade routes.

1998, basing their decision on the fact that it had been unilaterally ascribed by Russia.²²²

However, the bilateral subject area that gained greatest preponderance in the international public sphere was the debate over the future status of the Tashkent Aviation Production Association (TAPO – *Tashkentskoe Aviacionnoe Proizvodstvennoe Ob'edinenie*). TAPO was one of the Soviet Union's largest aircraft assembly lines and the greatest producer of (*Ilyushin*) II-76MF airplanes. The factory had originally been founded in Moscow in 1932, but moved to Uzbekistan in 1941 to avoid being destroyed in World War II. It eventually became an important symbol of Central Asia's industrial potential and thus very much connected to the region's modern economic history and, more importantly, to the roles of seeking *genuine independence* and *developer of Uzbekistan's future* invoked by President Karimov, who had himself been a manager at the factory before entering political life. Arslan Ruzmetov, the former director general of Uzbekistan Airways, confirmed in a number of interviews that President Karimov was personally very interested in aviation, which evidently increased the public visibility of the sector.²²³ As a matter of fact, Uzbekistan's leader was swift in creating the country's first airline company in 1992 and called for significant investments in new planes (mostly Boeings).

Tashkent publicly committed itself to keeping the large facility operational, which could only be done with Moscow's acquiescence, as almost all components originated from Russia. Apparently, a significant breakthrough was reached, at which point Tashkent was able to remain one of the main production units of *Ilyushin*-type airplanes.²²⁴ The agreement came out of Moscow's decision to create the *Ilyushin* Production Complex in January 1997 in order to absorb all makers of Il-type aircraft.²²⁵ After 1998, the group included TAPO but, according to the press, Tashkent demanded 300 million dollars to place the factory under Russian control. Moscow was reluctant, yet Uzbekistan's government was not willing to surrender the plant without a financial settlement;²²⁶ thereby continuing with its *defence of equality* and pursuit of *genuine independence*. In any case, the negotiations stagnated temporarily in 1998 due to economic crisis. The issue remained unsettled for the time being and would resurface periodically in following years (see below).

²²² For a compilation of Uzbekistani laws and parliamentary declarations, visit Uzbekistan's online archive: <http://www.lex.uz/>.

²²³ 'Uzbekistan Airways Rebuilds Its Central Asian Hub' *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, April 1998.

²²⁴ 'Uzbekistan, Russia to set up interstate aircraft-building company' *BBC Monitoring Central Asia*, May 1997.

²²⁵ For more on TAPO negotiations, see 'Transfer of Il-76 manufacture from Uzbekistan to Russia' *political issue* *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 12 September 2003.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

IV.3. Rapprochement 2000-2006: A shift in Russia's Roles

After a number of visible quarrels in the late 1990s, Moscow gradually changed its attitude toward the 'near abroad'. President Putin endorsed Eurasianism (Sakwa 2004: 269) and publicly subscribed to strengthening his country's links with Central Asia. The lack of political success in the region, particularly with regards to Uzbekistan, probably induced a small adjustment in roles, as Moscow sought rapprochement with its CIS counterpart. President Putin thus signalled his public wish to normalize a number of commercial relationships, particularly in the arms and energy sectors.²²⁷ Additionally, during the infamous Colour Revolutions, as political instability increased in some former Soviet countries, President Putin backed the governments of in-fellow CIS partners. All these events built greater role compatibility in the bilateral relationship, leading to rapprochement.

The shift in Russia's strategy in 2000: Recognizing Uzbekistan's importance

President Yeltsin resigned from his office on 31 December 1999, making Vladimir Putin the acting President of the Russian Federation. Curiously, he had travelled to Uzbekistan just a few days before - his first ever foreign trip abroad as acting Prime Minister.²²⁸ The destination was not a random choice and was actually the first step in a growing trend. In fact, Uzbekistan was again his first stopover as President in May 2000. Mr Putin thus conveyed publicly his commitment toward Mr Karimov and the rest of Central Asia. Naturally, having Russia's second President travelling to Uzbekistan first among all others played up to Mr Karimov's *prestige*-based roles and during the visit he admitted that the two countries had clashing interests, although Tashkent was in need of Moscow being a reliable partner.²²⁹

²²⁷ See Richard Sakwa (2004) and William Tompson (2004) for detailed discussions on the economic policy of President Putin's new administration.

²²⁸ The meeting was probably another attempt at boosting relations between the two countries after the more or less turbulent period of 1998, whereby both agreed to conduct joint military exercises in the future. For instance, in April 2000, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan all participated in the military exercise 'Southern Shield of Commonwealth 2000'. Uzbekistani forces also joined the exercises but only within their own borders, thereby distancing themselves from militarized coalitions in Central Asia. See 'CIS 'Anti-Terrorist' Exercise in Tajikistan', *Jamestown Foundation*, 14 April 2000, available at http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=24399&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=207, accessed May 2012.

²²⁹ 'Russian, Uzbek heads hold news conference in Tashkent', *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 22 May 2000.

Despite the show of gratitude, it would seem that rapprochement still had a long way to go, especially after the problematic 1990s period. Even as the situation in Afghanistan deteriorated, President Karimov dispelled any notion that he was changing policy and begging Russia for help: ‘please tell Russia, there is no need to defend us. Should people come to our country and die on Uzbekistan's borders? There is no need to shed blood on our behalf. Uzbeks are capable of responding blow for blow themselves. Having said that, we need equipment and armaments in order to defend ourselves.’²³⁰

It is important to bear in mind that, in the summer of 1999, Tashkent was threatened by the IMU’s incursions into Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Also, in the following summer, the IMU was again able to mobilize into former Soviet Central Asia, causing widespread fear in Uzbekistan.²³¹ Mr Karimov was subsequently unable to attend a CIS summit in Yalta but, according to the Russian press, received a sympathetic call from Mr Putin.²³²

So, by the end of 2000, the difficult security situation in Central Asia, coupled with President Putin’s efforts to fight terrorism at home and abroad, led to greater role compatibility. Tashkent’s military forces cooperated with CIS’s Southern military exercises in September 2000,²³³ and Moscow also opened a business centre in Uzbekistan. Still, some incidents made clear that rapprochement remained a sinuous path. In October 2000, President Karimov criticized the creation of the Eurasian Economic Community (Eurasec), consisting of Russia, Belarus and other Central Asian states. Like his previous critiques, he pointed out that the new organization was an illusionary scheme and called, instead, for implementing a free trade zone.²³⁴ Moreover, President Karimov remained consistent in his appeals for *seeking genuine independence* by remonstrating against Moscow’s decision to reinstate the Soviet Union’s anthem in December 2000, claiming that the hymn symbolized a totalitarian system.²³⁵

²³⁰ ‘President warns air force could strike Afghan bases if necessary’ *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 30 May 2000.

²³¹ Interview source (2009-2012). See Appendix IV for information regarding sources.

²³² ‘Uzbek leader says Russia had, has, will have interests in Central Asia’ *BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit*, 22 June 2000.

²³³ Even though they participated, they were not fully integrated with the Russian, Kyrgyz, Kazakh and Tajik forces.

²³⁴ ‘Uzbek head criticizes idea of Eurasian Economic Community’ *BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit*, 13 October 2000.

²³⁵ ‘Uzbek President blasts plan to reinstate Stalinist Anthem’ *Agence Presse France*, 14 December 2000.

President Putin's public commitment to consolidating Russia's connection to Central Asia was made evident by the number of agreements on energy and arms supplies he put forth. In January 2002, he even called for a 'Eurasian alliance of gas producers', of which Uzbekistan was supposed to be part (Allison 2004: 289). This focus on economic partnerships was more in line with President Karimov's technocratic roles and calls for *de-ideologized* and *technocratic* relations, based on business, trade and security. Also, in March 2001, a Russian delegation led by Col-General Leonid Ivashov met with Uzbekistan's Defence Minister, Qodir G'ulomov, – an encounter which led to more Russian arms supplies and a quota increase for Uzbekistani officers in Russia's military academies. President Karimov apparently replied with a *quid pro quo* by stating that he had rejected the US Defense Secretary's offer of permanent advisers among Uzbekistan's troops.²³⁶ Such statements naturally corresponded to a Great Game type of rhetoric, which inevitably became more preponderant as Washington engaged actively with the region after 2001 (see Chapter V).

In May 2001, President Karimov made an official visit to Moscow at President Putin's bequest. According to the press, the two discussed security cooperation and boosting trade.²³⁷ When returning back to Uzbekistan, President Karimov highlighted that he was satisfied with the progress in bilateral relations, although he cautioned again that he was not looking for any kind of favours from Russia's government, since these usually came at a price.²³⁸

In addition to greater security cooperation, President Karimov seems to have also welcomed Moscow's interest in Uzbekistan's energy sector, which was entirely compatible with *developing* the country's economy. A new enterprise was established in July 2001, when Lukoil and Itera, two Russian oil companies, signed an agreement with Uzbekneftgaz.²³⁹ Afterwards, in December 2002, Alexey Miller, Chairman of Gazprom, signed a strategic agreement with Tashkent, entailing the long-term purchase of gas. This was a new hallmark in the relationship and so, in August 2003, President Putin travelled once more to Uzbekistan, where he formalized the agreement

²³⁶ -Russian paper describes military cooperation talks in UzbekistanøBBC Worldwide Monitoring, 2 March 2001.

²³⁷ -Uzbekistan, Russia agrees to set up military cooperation groups ó fullerøBBC Worldwide Monitoring, 6 May 2001.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ -Lukoil, Itera, Uzbekneftgaz deal for joint developmentøRussian Company News, August 2 2001.

in Samarkand. At the meeting, Russia's president gave special emphasis to his country's new commitments towards Uzbekistan's defence and energy sectors.²⁴⁰

The effects of the Colour Revolutions: Consolidating Russian-Uzbekistani relations

As rapprochement was gaining momentum, the relationship received yet another boost when, in the Novembers of 2003 and 2004, revolutions took place in Georgia and Ukraine (Kuzio 2005: 429-494; Tudoroiu 2007: 329). Uzbekistani authorities were quick to respond to the democratizing trends by placing a variety of legal restrictions on local and international NGOs (Ilkhamov 2005a: 298-301). For that reason, President Putin's adjustment toward *technocracy* and Eurasianism was resulting in increased role compatibility with Tashkent, particularly as the international context focused on political reform. However, it is important to be aware that even though both were visibly sceptical about the reformist backlash instigated by the Colour Revolutions, Mr Karimov did not consider Moscow an innocent bystander in Ukraine's Orange Revolution.²⁴¹ Nevertheless, soon after the Georgian revolution and the subsequent ousting of President Shevardnadze, the discontinuity was conducive to *protecting stability*. In April 2004, a Uzbekistani-Russian Business Council was set up in Moscow and then, in May, the Russian Defence Minister proclaimed that the two countries were preparing joint military exercises for 2005 (Nuritov 2004) - an announcement that preceded a new bilateral Strategic Partnership agreement, signed in June 2004.²⁴² The treaty strengthened the positive moment in the two countries' relations and reinforced Moscow's importance in Uzbekistan's security sector. Article 8 of the agreement even prepared for the eventuality of Russian forces using military facilities in Uzbekistan's territory (although the article safeguarded that, if that was to happen, it would have to be settled in a separate accord).²⁴³ A few weeks later, President Karimov praised the new phase in Uzbekistani-Russian relations and underlined the importance of his own personal relationship with President Putin.²⁴⁴ The security agreement could also not have had better timing for *protecting stability* given that in both March and July 2004 Tashkent suffered two terrorist attacks (Islamov 2004).²⁴⁵

²⁴⁰ -Putin optimistic on Russian Gazprom deal in UzbekistanøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 6 August 2003.

²⁴¹ -Uzbek leader's interview in parliament intermission - fuller versionøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 3 December 2004.

²⁴² -Ibid.

²⁴³ -Russia, Uzbekistan set to boost military, economic cooperationøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 19 June 2004.

²⁴⁴ -Uzbek leader hails ties with RussiaøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 26 August 2004.

²⁴⁵ It is important to note that it is doubtful whether the reasons for the two attacks were as simple as what was portrayed by Uzbekistani authorities. For alternative interpretations, see, for example, -US, Israel

After Andijan: The peak of Uzbekistani-Russian relations

On 13 May 2005, Uzbekistan's troops fired on protestors in the Ferghana Valley city of Andijan. A day later, the leader of the Russian Communist party argued that the United States was in some way behind the Andijan uprising.²⁴⁶ Eventually, Washington reprimanded Uzbekistan for the violent outcome (see Chapters V and VI for a more detailed description of the events).²⁴⁷ President Putin, in contrast, was quick to support his Uzbekistani counterpart. In June 2005, Mr Karimov met with the Russian President in Moscow. The latter publicly stated that he agreed with Tashkent's version of the events, pointing out that the crisis had been organized from outside the country.²⁴⁸ Also, the two leaders continued with business as usual, thereby reinforcing President Karimov's role of *protector of stability*. In September, for the first time in the history of their relationship, the two countries executed bilateral military exercises in Uzbekistan's southern region of Jizzax, as had been planned in the previous year. Moreover, the two sides increased their economic linkages when Russian state-owned Lukoil obtained a stake in Uzbekistan's side of the Aral Sea.²⁴⁹

In November 2005, President Karimov travelled once more to Moscow (the second time in that year), where he and President Putin publicly pledged to fulfil the 2004 Strategic Partnership agreement.²⁵⁰ The bilateral relationship was then at its peak and President Karimov eschewed his public scepticism of Eurasec and joined the organization in January 2006. He then declared that some of the country's laws would have to change to accommodate the integration projects of that organization.²⁵¹ Soon after, in June 2006, Uzbekistan also became a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), another Moscow-sponsored project for collective military action.

In spite of the momentum and political adjustments toward cooperation, the Secretary General of the CSTO, Nikolay Bordyuzha, was slightly more cautious about regional integration. He warned before accession that Tashkent's membership was not

Russia helped set up bloody events in eastern Uzbekistan, says report *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 29 June 2005.

²⁴⁶ -Russian communist leader sees US 'fingerprints' in Uzbek unrest *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 14 May 2005.

²⁴⁷ -EU urges Uzbek authorities to rein in military clampdown on population *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 17 May 2005.

²⁴⁸ -Russia's Putin hopes for stabilisation in Uzbekistan *Agence Presse France*, 28 June 2005.

²⁴⁹ -Russian, Chinese energy giants set up consortium to develop Uzbek gas fields *AP Worldstream*, 8 September 2005.

²⁵⁰ -1.8 Subjects *Kommersant*, 15 November 2005.

²⁵¹ -Uzbekistan sets limits for cooperation with Russia *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 10 March 2006.

being considered;²⁵² perhaps hinting at how difficult it would be to negotiate a power-sharing agreement with Central Asia's persistent *defender of equality, seeker of genuine independence* and *voice for non-militarism*.²⁵³ Obviously, it is important to recall that this peak of public goodwill had an uneasy foundation, seeing as a number of bilateral issues remained unresolved. Indeed, just a few years before, Russia's Deputy Finance Minister warned that Uzbekistan's debt to Moscow harmed economic relations between the two countries.²⁵⁴ Moreover, as it collided with his role of *non-militaristic voice for Central Asia*, Mr Karimov had in 2002 publicly disapproved of Russian forces using the Kant Air Base in Kyrgyzstan.²⁵⁵

IV.4. Deterioration 2007-2010: The persistence of unresolved issue-areas

By 2008, friction between Tashkent and Moscow in the international public sphere was out in the open. Indeed, such was the degree of public discord that Prime Minister Putin travelled personally to Uzbekistan, in what the Russian press described as an attempt to halt the growing tension between the two states.²⁵⁶ The trip managed to reopen some channels of communication, although it was not enough to prevent Tashkent from announcing its withdrawal from Eurasec a month later.

The triggers for the discontinuity were essentially the clashes over debt payments, gas and oil pricing, the future of TAPO and the degree of Russian assertiveness in the region. Given the complexity of the problems, this last part of the narrative will portray each of those issues separately, even though one should be aware that they were all inter-linked and affected President Karimov's roles as a *defender of equality, seeker of genuine independence, mercantilist entrepreneur, non-militaristic voice* and *undisputed authority* (see above).

Still, it is impossible to ignore that, as role conflict between Moscow and Tashkent augmented, Tashkent's relationship with the West improved. The Central Asian Republic was actually being contemplated as a major transit country for NATO

²⁵² -Uzbekistan's accession to CSTO not considered now ó secretary generaløBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 20 May 2006.

²⁵³ -Uzbekistan sets limits for cooperation with RussiaøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 10 March 2006.

²⁵⁴ -Uzbek debts to Russia impede bilateral economic tiesøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 4 May 2003.

²⁵⁵ -Uzbek President Says no to foreign military rivalry in Central AsiaøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 12 December 2002.

²⁵⁶ -Putin signs energy agreements in UzbekistanøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 2 September 2008.

supplies to Afghanistan (see Chapter V),²⁵⁷ and the EU also removed some of its sanctions in October 2008. While this turn of events certainly affected Central Asian geopolitics, one must be aware of the fact that the growing level of friction with Russia originated from a particular dynamic, intrinsic to that bilateral relationship, rather than from the changing external context. The conclusion of this thesis will, however, readdress this point as it discusses role theory and strategic interaction. For now, it is important to observe that, around 2008, role conflict resurfaced as Moscow underlined its Eurasian roles and was more determined to strengthen its position in the region.²⁵⁸

Russia's encroachment through CSTO and Eurasec

Unease between Tashkent and Moscow in 2008 grew partly in response to a number of disagreements over the internal workings of both Eurasec and the CSTO. Looking closely at how President Karimov publicly called for *seeking genuine independence, defending equality* and *non-militarism*, problems could have been foreshadowed immediately after Uzbekistan joined the new military organization. At the time, President Karimov quickly suggested merging Eurasec with CSTO, thereby questioning the independent aims of both Moscow led organizations.²⁵⁹

Moscow also moved to enhance its roles for the region, advocating in 2008 for the creation of a joint CSTO force. President Karimov, though, remained a staunch supporter of his country's *genuine independence* and *non-militarism* and thus opposed the initiative. Moreover, he rejected implementing a Collective Rapid Reaction Forces (CRRF) and publicly conveyed his displeasure by not attending the Yerevan CSTO summit in April 2009 (Akhmadov 2009b). Overall, Tashkent's position was that collective forces should not be permanent, that their actions should be based on consensus, and that provisions for non-interventionism would have to be ensured if Uzbekistan was to contemplate joining CRRF (Tolipov 2009).

Tashkent remained within CSTO for the time being, although it was apparently less reluctant to leave Eurasec - perhaps because of the growing friction within the latter. The decision seems to have been partially instigated by the Eurasec October 2007 summit, where Russia and all other member states sided with Tajikistan in favour of redistributing water resources in Central Asia. President Karimov, who was

²⁵⁷ -US-Uzbekistan relations: Another Step toward rapprochementø*Eurasianet.org*, 22 January 2008, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav012308b.shtml>, accessed October 2011.

²⁵⁸ See Gawdat Baghat (2007) and Rafael Kantiyotiø (2008) works for an account of how Moscow pursued its geopolitical interests in Central Asia more actively after 2006.

²⁵⁹ -Uzbek leader moots merger of CIS security body, Eurasian economic blocø*BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit*, 16 August 2006.

attending, was also subjected to a wave of criticism from Tajikistani officials, all of whom remonstrated against Uzbekistan's restrictive Visa regime (Saidov 2008). This seems to have been the last straw (Ibid).²⁶⁰ Indeed, such blatant attacks conflicted with President Karimov's *undisputed authority*.

Consequently, with the relations within Eurasec at a low point, Uzbekistani authorities announced their withdrawal from the organization in late 2008, slightly after the EU removed its sanctions. Once more, the timing of the decision suggests a certain *quid pro quo* that fits nicely with the strategic rationale of playing one against the other (see Introduction and Chapter I). This issue will be readdressed in the Conclusion, but, as demonstrated below, the difficult relations within Eurasec and CSTO were only one dimension of Russian-Uzbekistani relations and not entirely of Moscow's making, rather the reflection of growing power disputes in Central Asia.²⁶¹ Furthermore, the decision to quit Eurasec also has to be read in the light of growing bilateral friction.

The persistence of unresolved issues: debt, TAPO and negotiating gas and oil prices

From 2008, several problematic bilateral issues were under the public spotlight. Uzbekistan's debt to Russia was certainly one of them. Indeed, President Medvedev visited his Central Asian partner in 2010 and, according to the Russian press, personally brought up the issue of debt repayments with his Uzbekistani counterpart. Tashkent, though, refused clearing its old credits, but the nature of the talks remained secluded (Panfilova 2010). Moreover, Tashkent's policy of hindering convertibility to protect local industries (Rosenberg & Zeeuw 2001: 160) made it difficult for some Russian enterprises to transfer profits to their mother companies, making negotiations between the two increasingly hard.²⁶²

As concerns the aviation sector, problems arose mainly due to President Karimov's strict adherence to the roles of *mercantilist entrepreneur* and *seeker of genuine independence*. Apparently, Tashkent was publicly reluctant to see TAPO's

²⁶⁰ The main issue behind the rising tension was Tajikistan's attempt to revive the construction of the Roghun Dam. President Rahmon announced, in July 2007, that Tajikistan would build the plant by its own means; then, at a SCO summit in Bishkek in August of that year, he declared that the new dam would not cause a decrease in water supply to upstream countries. This last point is contested by President Karimov, who declared that the dam could seriously harm water deliveries to its agricultural sector, compromising its cotton fields. To exert further pressure, Uzbekistani authorities implemented, in 2008, occasional blockades on goods travelling by rail to Tajikistan (Karim 2008).

²⁶¹ Controversy over water distribution between Uzbekistan's upstream neighbours, namely Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, was one issue-area that grew dramatically in importance during the period (see previous Chapter III).

²⁶² See, for example, the following article: 'Kazakh paper: Uzbek leader scolds Russian media as ties remain tense' *BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit*, 25 April 2010.

industrial relevance deteriorate. For example, a few years before, in late 1999, President Karimov took Mr Putin on a tour of TAPO; perhaps in order to show its importance to Uzbekistan's industrial sector.²⁶³ As such, the plant became a kind of symbol, given how much President Karimov appealed for economic self-reliance and the need for industry.²⁶⁴

Following the stagnant negotiations of the 1990s, TAPO gained new life in 2001 when a contract for six Il-78 aircraft was signed with India.²⁶⁵ According to the Russian press, though, this did not solve the problem, as Tashkent was unwilling to acknowledge Russian royalties (Lantratov 2003). The problem regarding the financial reward led Moscow to retort, as it supported transferring *Ilyushin* production to the Voronezh Aircraft Manufacturing Association in Russia. According to the press, this imminent relocation was discussed between Presidents Karimov and Putin in 2003.²⁶⁶ No progress was made, although the press persistently hinted that *Ilyushin* aircraft production would eventually be transferred to Voronezh (Mukhin 2004).

The situation eventually became more politicized after 2005, when Russia negotiated a 1.5 billion dollar contract to supply aircraft to China. TAPO was included in the production consortium, even though it was slow in abiding to production deadlines.²⁶⁷ Consequently, Moscow demanded publicly that either production would have to take place in Russia or TAPO would need to join Russia's United Aircraft Company (UAC).²⁶⁸ Negotiations continued until November 2006, during the peak of Russian-Uzbekistani relations. The press revealed that both sides signed a protocol, wherein Tashkent agreed to include TAPO within UAC in exchange for receiving shares in the holding company (Ivanov 2008). Once more, though, the agreement was not implemented, reaching a stalemate in February 2008. According to the press, President Karimov disagreed with UAC's limited design for TAPO (Mukhin 2009) and so it would seem that an *equal* Uzbekistan and its *mercantilist* roles were only compatible with TAPO having greater strategic importance.

Besides TAPO and the issue of debt, the period running from 2007 to 2008 was also complicated as far as bilateral oil and gas negotiations were concerned. Moscow's 2006 gas dispute with Kiev brought a degree of discontinuity to the energy market and

²⁶³ -Russian premier visits Uzbek aircraft factory, Russian Theatre, *BBC Monitoring Central Asia*, 11 December 1999.

²⁶⁴ For more on Uzbekistani economic self-reliance, see Gleason (2003). On how President Karimov publicly manifested his economic policy for the country, see Chapter III.

²⁶⁵ -Soviet-era plant back in action thanks to contract for Indian planes, *Associated Press Worldstream*, 17 December 2001.

²⁶⁶ -Transfer of Il-76 manufacture from Uzbekistan to Russia, *political issue*, op. cit.

²⁶⁷ -Farewell to Tashkent; Russia is preparing to relocate production of IL-76 from Uzbekistan to Russia, *WPS Observer*, 21 August 2006.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

so the Russian government sought to circumvent the EU's attempts to bypass its gas supplies (see Chapter VI). It is important to bear in mind that President Karimov had already agreed in July 2007 to be part of a natural gas transit and supply scheme from Turkmenistan to China.²⁶⁹ Given the circumstances, Russia's influence in the Central Asian energy sector was not as preponderant as it had been in the 1990s and President Putin moved quickly to secure gas supplies from Central Asia (Kandiyoti 2008: 85-86). His dealings were paying off since, by December 2007, Moscow signed a number of agreements with Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (Ibid: 88).

Nevertheless, Moscow sought quite openly to obtain cheaper gas from Central Asia in order to then export its own gas to Europe at much higher prices (Ibid). President Karimov like his neighbours was true to *equality* and demanded European prices for gas exports. According to the Russian press, he visited Moscow in February 2008 (his first visit since his re-election in 2007) in order to settle a new pricing mechanism.²⁷⁰

During the negotiations that followed, Moscow temporarily embargoed Uzbekistani cotton on 12 May 2008, which was justified as necessary to prevent the spread of crop disease.²⁷¹ The reasons for the decision remain unclear, yet the timing certainly suggests coercion. Tashkent then reciprocated by having the name of one of its central avenues changed from Pushkin to Independence (*Mustaqillik*).²⁷² Moreover, Uzbekistani authorities also allowed Petronas, a Malaysian oil company, to explore fields that at one point had been allocated to Lukoil.²⁷³ Russia's new President, Dmitry Medvedev, responded by ignoring Uzbekistan in his first visit to Central Asia.

It would seem that negotiations were at an impasse and the relationship deteriorating. To solve the conundrum, Mr Putin, who was now Russia's Prime-Minister, personally travelled to Uzbekistan, where he appealed for a settlement.²⁷⁴ The public gesture apparently had some pay-offs, as President Medvedev later decided to visit Uzbekistan and also voiced his personal scepticism toward Tajikistan's Roghun project.²⁷⁵ Moscow thus slightly adjusted its roles and showed greater compatibility with President Karimov's more recent public concerns over protecting *Central Asia's*

²⁶⁹ -Tashkent Backs Turkmen-Chinese gas pipeline projectø*BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 27 July 2007.

²⁷⁰ -Russian, Uzbek cooperation accords signedø*BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit*, 6 February 2008.

²⁷¹ -Tashkent continues to drift away from Russia, but not necessarily toward the Westø*Eurasianet.org*, 15 July 2008, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav071508f.shtml>, accessed November 2011.

²⁷² -Tashkent is up to its old geopolitical tricksø*Times of Central Asia*, 30 May 2008.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ -Putin Signs Energy Agreements in Uzbekistanø*BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 2 September 2008.

²⁷⁵ Even though Moscow had stopped the dam's construction in 2007, until then it had not taken a clear position on the issue.

environment. Accordingly, Uzbekistan's leader praised Moscow's new position: 'Uzbekistan counts on Russia's well-thought-out and considered position on issues relating the implementation of hydro power projects in the Central Asian region (...) This issue is vital for me, and not only for me, but also for the whole population of Uzbekistan, especially, if we take into consideration a disaster and tragedy - the shrinking of the Aral Sea - that we have been experiencing for several years.'²⁷⁶

Overall, 2008 showed that President Karimov never quite relinquished his public position on Uzbekistan's self-reliance. The fact that the relationship peaked after 2005 was not a sign that things had changed. While President Putin had gradually adjusted the way in which Moscow interacted with Central Asian counterparts, Russia's government did not fully abandon some of its other traditional roles for the region, which led to less cooperation after 2008.

President Karimov, too, did not compromise his public positions and continued being a staunch advocate of Uzbekistan's *international equality* and *genuine independence*, especially vis à vis Russia. So the relationship remained a mixture of conflict and cooperation throughout the twenty years. Role compatibility was certainly visible between 2000 and 2006 and, afterwards, both agreed to have TAPO become a repair centre for Russian helicopters in 2007,²⁷⁷ as well as having Tashkent receive surface-to-air missiles.²⁷⁸ Moreover, in December 2009, Gazprom signed another contract with Uztransgaz for importing natural gas,²⁷⁹ thereby continuing with bilateral energy cooperation. All these instances, among others mentioned above, suggest that, when the two managed to downplay competitive rhetoric and focus mainly on *technocratic* roles, cooperation ensued. Nonetheless, with both rarely adjusting their core roles - specifically Moscow pursuing unilateral Eurasian interests against Tashkent's demand for *equality* -, it is difficult to foresee a future of closer cooperation.

²⁷⁶ -Uzbek leader focuses on Afghan security during Russian counterpart's visitøBBC Worldwide Monitoring, 24 January 2009.

²⁷⁷ -Russia, Uzbekistan sign agreement on combat helicopters JVøRia Novosti, 7 March 2007.

²⁷⁸ -Uzbekistan, Russia set priorities in military cooperationøRussia & CIS Newswire, 30 October 2007.

²⁷⁹ Gazprom had already signed a contract with Uztransgaz in 2005. See -Gazprom, Uzbekistan agree on 2010 gas transit and supply termsøRussia & CIS Business & Financial Daily, 11 December 2009.

V. The Uzbekistani-American Relationship 1991-2010

The Uzbekistani-American bilateral relationship is hinged on deep role incompatibility. Throughout the years, out of all of the roles in President Karimov's set, *protecting stability* and *developing Uzbekistan's economic future* were practically the only ones that converged with Washington. Even in periods of more observable cooperation in the international public sphere, such as after 11 September 2001, their partnership remained an illusion, as Heathershaw (2007) described (see Chapter II). Role discontinuities were also prevalent when a number of shifting contexts led to divergent roles resurfacing over time – much like Uzbekistan's relationship with Russia. In short, the narrative is emplotted by several inter-role conflicts, all of which provoked a number of public credibility problems for the two actors.

One reason for the occasional altercations was the fact that Washington's agenda for the region was never wholly coherent, in part due to intra-role conflict between its own foreign policy makers. American foreign policy is both complex and highly political, whereby the President, Congress, the Department of State (DoS) and the Department of Defense (DoD) endorse a number of frequently competing priorities (Rosati & Scott 2011: 5).

Other than Washington's lack of role coherency, Central Asia was also a relatively novel area for many of its officials and analysts (Hill 2002). In fact, the independence of the Central Asian Republics came as a surprise (Rumer 2007: 18), causing uncertainty about which strategy to endorse and leading to an ambiguous foreign policy (Akbarzadeh 2005: 61). Nevertheless, Washington participated in Central Asian politics from the outset and Uzbekistan slowly managed to cooperate with the world's super power as the two sides recognized the importance of *protecting stability* – a role that was very much endorsed by American leadership after the first Gulf War (Le Prestre 1997b: 72).

The story begins with Washington seeking to carry out Secretary of State James Baker's principles of self-determination, respect for democracy, Human Rights and international law under the 1992 Freedom Support Act (Rumer 2007: 20-22). The roles of spreading democracy and market principles became a key aspect of American foreign policy for the region and were never fully disregarded, albeit their preponderance waning at particular moments in time.

Washington's reformist programme led to bilateral role conflict. President Karimov's roles of *technocratic expert* and *undisputed authority* hardly matched the American pro-democratic agenda, thereby affecting Washington's willingness to approach Tashkent in the early 1990s. Washington ignored Uzbekistan and, instead,

praised its neighbours, all of which was a significant stab at President Karimov's public credibility, particularly his role of *defender of Uzbekistan's great image*. Tashkent though did not budge from seeking greater recognition as well as American investment for boosting *technocratic* roles. Eventually, as Washington considered new economic projects for the region (Blank 2001: 127), channels of communication began opening, irrespective of President Karimov's blatant authoritarianism.

However, it was not in the field of economics that cooperation surfaced. When security in the region reverberated into the international public sphere in the mid-1990s, the credibility of President Karimov's regime in *protecting stability* allowed for role compatibility and a degree of rapprochement. By 2008, this became the only role with which both sides converged, given that the United States became even more committed to ending the Afghan conflict (Blank 2007: 1; Akbarzadeh 2005: 75; Hill 2002). However, providing stability was frequently at odds with Washington's other roles insofar as it contradicted its reformist and democratic credibility. Gradually, this would lead to greater intra-role conflict between the DoS and the DoD, which then had repercussions in the bilateral relationship. For that reason, the 2002 partnership was characterized by permanent inter-role conflict, leading to a partial change in President Karimov's rhetoric, as he began focusing more on differentiating Uzbekistan from the West (see Chapter 3).

V.1. A Bad Start: Uzbekistani-American relations 1991-1994

In March 1992, Washington was quick to open an Embassy in Tashkent, soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Another potential boost for bilateral relations came when American businesses, such as Newmont Mining Corporation, hastened to tap Uzbekistan's mineral wealth.²⁸⁰ Indeed, economic cooperation was theoretically a way in which the two sides could strengthen their relationship, leading to the creation of American-Uzbek chamber of commerce in 1993.

Politically though Washington remained distant from Uzbekistan. Stanley Escudero was the first official of the DoS to travel to Uzbekistan in 1993 and reports at the time mention little on the prospects of greater cooperation. Instead, Mr Escudero

²⁸⁰ Newmont established a joint venture with the Uzbekistani government for exploring the Muruntau mining complex in February 1992. For more on the joint-venture, which was nationalized by Tashkent between 2006 and 2007, see: 'Zarafshan-Newmont, Uzbekistan' *Mining-technology.com*, available at <http://www.mining-technology.com/projects/zarafshan/>, accessed February 2011.

focused on the surrounding context and on assisting the region with humanitarian aid as the war in Tajikistan escalated.²⁸¹

It would seem, then, that the first instances of Washington's engagement with Tashkent barely corresponded to the grand roles proclaimed by President Karimov after independence (see Chapter III), namely the slogans of *developer for the country's future*, *defender of international equality* and *protector of a great image*. The United States, as the world's most powerful economy, would do much to boost President Karimov's credibility, insofar as it fitted nicely with his other role of *bridging Uzbekistan to other markets*. Indeed, Uzbekistan's President showed his support for Washington in a variety of situations. For example, in June 1993 he supported an American raid in Iraq²⁸² and, later in November 1993, he also proposed creating a Central Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, thereby aligning his policy with the American non-nuclear proliferation programme (Allison 2001: 224).²⁸³ Tashkent, though, despite the efforts, was effectively rebuffed by Washington while some of its neighbours were praised. President Akaev of Kyrgyzstan was received by the White House in May 1993 and then, in December, Vice-President Al Gore travelled to the region where he met with President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan.

President Karimov's bad start

Washington's apparent little interest for Tashkent was triggered in part by President Karimov's roles of *undisputed authority*, *voice for de-ideologizing politics* and *protecting stability*. In other words, Mr Karimov's regime effectively endorsed authoritarianism in the early 1990s as it repressed opposition.²⁸⁴ Indeed, no other case led to greater inter-role conflict than the May 1992 beating of Abdurahim Po'lat, the leader of the opposition party *Birlik*. The incident had repercussions in Washington, given that at the time, an American delegation led by Senator Larry Pressler was visiting Uzbekistan to assess the implementation of the Freedom Support Act. On returning to the United States, he recounted what he saw to Congress and described the

²⁸¹ On Mr Escudero's visit, see a small report in 'General and Western Relations; US mission allocates humanitarian aid for Tajikistan' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 30 January 1993.

²⁸² See a proclamation of support given by Uzbekistan's Ministry of Foreign affairs at 'Uzbek Foreign Ministry describes US raid on Iraq as a 'practical step'' *Interfax news agency*, 29 June 1993.

²⁸³ Besides explicit vocal support, Tashkent's business contacts with the United States increased as it ordered twenty trucks from Caterpillar Inc. See 'Caterpillar strikes two deals in former Soviet Union' *United Press International*, 22 November 1993.

²⁸⁴ From 1991 to 1992, President Karimov curbed the rise of Uzbekistani opposition as well as potential adversaries (Melvin 2000: 31-32; Fierman 1997: 375-387). Subsequently, the leaders of *Erk* and *Birlik* were repressed and the Vice President's post removed.

injuries inflicted on one of Uzbekistan's main opposition leaders.²⁸⁵ He explained that he had managed to enter the hospital and talk to Mr Po'lat. The Senator then relayed that Uzbekistani authorities were unwilling to take heed of his criticism and that the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs dismissed his questions, by invoking that it was an internal affair.²⁸⁶ The incident certainly led to friction and Senator Pressler recommended rejecting all of President Karimov's requests for being received at the White House: 'the United States should not invite notorious charlatans like President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan to visit the United States to meet and greet President Bush (...) I commend the Bush Administration for withdrawing for an indefinite period the invitation for Mr Karimov to visit this country. Thugs masquerading as democrats also should not qualify for aid.'²⁸⁷

As Bill Clinton was elected President little changed in the short-term. His Vice-President went on tour of Central Asia and blatantly ignored Uzbekistan. Furthermore, during the Secretary of State's confirmation hearing, in January 1993, Senator Pressler pressed him to continue rejecting close ties with Uzbekistan's President.²⁸⁸ Evidently, the Po'lat beating had not been forgotten and the event symbolized how Washington's democratic roles were not compatible with President Karimov's blatant authoritarianism. His role of *undisputed authority* continued damaging a potential relationship with the United States, even more so when, in January 1994, the Washington Times reported that Uzbekistan's government had forbid the renowned Central Asian scholar, William Fierman, to enter the country (Morrison 1994).

V.2. Improving relations 1995-2000: The Importance of Security after disappointing reform and economic investment

Much to Tashkent's good fortune, American oil and gas companies invested more in Central Asia in the mid-1990s. The Clinton Administration thus gradually took a special interest in the region's pivotal location and the potential that it had for bypassing Russia and Iran (Blank 2001: 130-131). The discontinuity would work in President Karimov's favour, especially because he gave some signs of political reform (even though he did not relinquish his *undisputed authority*). Eventually, Washington promoted a number of economic investments in Central Asia which, regrettably for

²⁸⁵ See the account of Senator Pressler's visit in 'A visit to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, and Latvia, to examine United States Assistance Policy in the Former Soviet Union' *The Library of Congress*, 12 August 1992, available at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?r102:791:./temp/~r102ffOcAg::>, accessed December 2012.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ibid

²⁸⁸ Read the full hearing in: 'Hearing of Senate Foreign Relations Committee' *Federal News Service*, 13 January 1993.

Uzbekistan, never fully materialized. Alternatively, as the war in Afghanistan escalated, it would be President Karimov's *stability* that allowed for increased inter-role compatibility.

Energy vs. Human Rights: President Karimov's visit to the United States

After 1994, President Karimov's regime made a few adjustments, such as freeing political prisoners and meeting with a few opposition members.²⁸⁹ These gestures - as well as Uzbekistan joining NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) in 1994 - coupled with speculation over Central Asia becoming a major energy hub, had some effects in the bilateral relationship, particularly after Enron Oil & Gas proposed a joint venture with Tashkent in February 1995.²⁹⁰ A change was on the horizon and American Secretary of Defense, William Perry, visited Uzbekistan in the spring of 1995.

According to the press, President Karimov's meeting with Mr Perry focused mainly on regional security and Uzbekistan's PfP participation.²⁹¹ Curiously, Secretary Perry praised Uzbekistan for being an 'island of stability' - a great boost to President Karimov's public credibility. Uzbekistan's leader then thanked Secretary Perry, even though he lamented that Washington had a 'distorted picture of Uzbekistan.'²⁹² He expanded on this last point by conceding that he was hoping for a stronger bilateral relationship, mainly as a way of leveraging against Russia's imperialism: 'first, there are the imperialist ambitions rearing up in Russia - I mean the chauvinist attitudes which are intensifying day by day in Russia.'²⁹³ Secondly, he underlined the necessity of obtaining American assistance for facing the threats emanating from extremism, namely from Afghanistan and Tajikistan.²⁹⁴ Thirdly, he discussed that American investment and commitment was crucial for his country if it were to implement political and economic reforms.²⁹⁵ In light of this last concession, it is important to note

²⁸⁹ In 1995, President Karimov met with former leaders of the opposition (Fierman 1997: 391), gave accreditation to the BBC, Radio Liberty and Voice of America and also released political activists from incarceration (Melvin 2000: 35). Then, in 1996, Uzbekistan's leader hosted a OSCE seminar on Human Rights, created a national *Ombudsman*, allowed for Human Rights Watch representation and established a Centre for National Human Rights (Melvin 2000: 37-39). None of these measures, however, affected President Karimov's *undisputed authority*, as shown below. As for reforming the economy, the situation saw little development and Tashkent actually implemented a multi-level exchange rate system, which was against the IMF's original plan (Blackmon 2005: 391).

²⁹⁰ For more on the joint venture, see 'Enron Oil & Gas International Inc. signs agreements to pursue joint venture development/marketing of Uzbekistan reserves' *Business Wire*, February 3 1995.

²⁹¹ See for example the following report: 'US defence secretary praises Uzbekistan as 'island of stability'' *Interfax news agency*, 6 April 1995.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ 'President Karimov seeks US help against Russian and Islamic threats' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 11 April 1995.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

that when questioned about Human Rights, President Karimov argued that the situation had changed, but that his agenda was economics (i.e. *technocratic* roles) and not politics: ‘the questions you are asking about restrictions on rights and persecution - yes, they did take place. But that is all in the past. We are convinced that political reforms must be founded on economic reforms, so we admit that political reforms are lagging behind economic reforms in Uzbekistan and we can understand the United States' critical attitude to the political reforms taking place here.’²⁹⁶ So, Mr Karimov remained somewhat consistent with other declarations invoking the need for *technocracy* (see Chapter III). He also added that Uzbekistani mentality was not yet suitable to a market economy.²⁹⁷

Upon returning to Washington, Secretary Perry publicly positioned himself in favour of more engagement with Uzbekistan. During a conference at the National Defense University College, he noted that, even though Human Rights are important, Uzbekistan’s *stability* could not be ignored: ‘it is one of the few countries in the former Soviet Union that is relatively strong economically. Indeed, it is one of the most - has one of the most active joint business programs with American companies of any of the countries in the region. From a security point of view, it's important because it stands as a countervailing force to regional instability, particularly to forces of extremism that are being exported from Iran.’²⁹⁸

It would seem that President Karimov succeeded in convincing some members of the United States security apparatus. So, for the short term, the stage was set for rapprochement which, according to the Russian media, allowed President Karimov to request an official visit to Washington during his trip to the United Nations in October 1995 (Musin 1996). The reply given, apparently, was that Washington would sanction the visit, if Tashkent pardoned around eighty political prisoners. Uzbekistan’s leader quickly obliged and so the visit was scheduled for the next summer (Ibid).

The June 1996 visit and the disappointing economic cooperation that followed

The June 1996 visit boosted President Karimov’s international *equality* and his country’s *image* abroad. Indeed, protocol and ceremony are relevant for Mr Karimov’s public credibility, as he later himself confessed during a NATO summit in 1999: ‘Uzbekistan and the USA, that is I as the Uzbek president and Mr Bill Clinton, sat next

²⁹⁶ -Human rights breaches belong to past - Uzbek leaderøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 8 April 1995.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ -Remarks by Secretary of Defense William PerryøFederal News Service, 15 April 1995.

to each other [sic]. Of course, it would not be surprising if many countries envied this. But this is not a matter of equality but of partnership.’²⁹⁹

The visit to Washington also helped strengthen President Karimov’s role of committed *developer of Uzbekistan’s future*. He travelled briefly to Colorado, meeting with representatives of American companies, and was also invited to give a presentation for the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). Evidently, the event acted as another boost in prestige - even more so because President Karimov was accustomed to delivering lengthy speeches on macroeconomic performance.³⁰⁰ He, therefore, gave a lengthy account on economic endowments and the potential for a profitable partnership:

I would like to make an official statement to the effect that Uzbekistan is interested in seeing our relations with the United States strengthened and grow. We are also interested in seeing American business, and American capital, take its rightful place in the Uzbekistani market (...) I want to just, you know, make use of this example and take advantage of this opportunity to let you all know that Uzbekistan intends to develop strategic long-term relations in this area. We want to orient ourselves to modern technology.³⁰¹

Following the presentation, President Karimov signed a series of economic agreements, strengthening Tashkent’s ties with Enron, as the company planned to invest 1.3 billion dollars in Uzbekistan’s gas fields over the next years.³⁰² OPIC also signalled its support for the project by pledging 400 million dollars of financing.³⁰³ On a final note, President Karimov approved a deal with TEXACO inc., which planned to market oil products in Uzbekistan’s internal market.³⁰⁴

All the business opportunities would seem to hint at a new phase in Uzbekistani-American relations. Indeed, in the following year, President Clinton’s wife visited Uzbekistan and was received by both President Karimov and his own wife, Tatyana Karimov. Mrs Clinton answered questions at Tashkent’s University of World Economy and Diplomacy and presented her newly-published book, whose Uzbek

²⁹⁹ -Refile Uzbek head: ‘We have to think about NATO Membership’ ó Full Versionø *BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 1 May 1999.

³⁰⁰ As a supposed *expert on economic matters*, many of President Karimov’s addresses to parliament provide lengthy compilations of economic data. Sometimes, the details are so extensive that they seem more like a speech given by a President of a Central Bank than a Head of State.

³⁰¹ -Uzbekistan President Islam Karimov and OPIC President Ruth Harkin Discuss a Joint U.S.-Uzbekistan Energy Ventureø *NBC*, 24 June 1996.

³⁰² -News: Uzbekistan/Development: Enron in dollars 1.3bn gas planø *FT Energy Newsletters - International Gas Report*, 26 April 1996.

³⁰³ -U.S. supports Uzbekistan gas projectø *United Press International*, 24 June 1996.

³⁰⁴ -Uzbekistan enters venture with Texacoø *United Press International*, 27 June 1996.

edition, according to the press, would be prefaced by Tatyana Karimov herself.³⁰⁵ Likewise, in November 1997, Prime Minister O'tkir Sultanov hosted a dinner at Uzbekistan's Embassy in Washington where he received a number of executives and potential American investors (Boustany 1997). Yet, despite the positive momentum, many of the economic initiatives were never fully implemented. In fact, only the TEXACO joint venture materialized. By 1998, Enron quit its position in Uzbekistan because of difficulties in operating and obstacles placed by Russia (Paige 1998). Furthermore, a UNOCAL project designed in November 1996 to supply gas to Pakistan was scrapped because of the problematic security situation in Afghanistan.³⁰⁶

Promise in the Silk Road initiative?

Whilst economic projects failed, President Karimov embraced the Silk Road initiative proposed by Republican Senator Sam Brownback, who advocated alternative export routes for Central Asia in an effort to curtail Russian and Iranian influence. He once even argued that this would be the only way to ensure the independence of many former Soviet states.³⁰⁷ Such a goal played well with President Karimov's roles of *bridge to joining other markets* and *seeker of genuine independence*. It thus seems clear that the Silk Road initiatives, as well as President Karimov's own comments regarding Russia's imperialist tendencies (see above), reveal how power politics was playing an important part in Central Asia. All the parties involved (see Chapter IV for some references to Russia's great power politics) were increasing the level of competition. Still, from a purely bilateral dimension, the Silk Road initiative conformed to President Karimov's appeals to breach Uzbekistan's geographical isolation (the possible geopolitical and strategic rationale is readdressed in the conclusion).

Senator Brownback visited Uzbekistan in April 1998³⁰⁸ and President Karimov became a signatory of the Ankara Pipeline Declaration – aiming at installing a major pipeline along the Caucasus. He thus embraced the Silk Road initiative and then joined GUAM during a NATO summit in 1999.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁵ See one report of Mrs Clinton's visit in 'Mrs Clinton arrives in Tashkent, opens women's hospital' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 15 November 1997.

³⁰⁶ See information on the UNOCAL project in 'DoD News Briefing, Rear Admiral Craig Quigley' *U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense*. 6 April 2000, available at <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=1165>, accessed August 2012.

³⁰⁷ On Senator Brownback's statements, see the following article: 'Developing a Silk Road' Strategy; Sen. Brownback Follows a Seldom Tread Path on Mideast Affairs' *The Washington Post*, 10 June 1997.

³⁰⁸ 'US Senator Meets Uzbek President' *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 16 April 1998.

³⁰⁹ GUAM consisted of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova. Its name then changed to GUUAM when Uzbekistan became a member.

GUAM was created with the purpose of fostering cooperation with NATO and establishing alternative transport routes for bypassing Russia and Iran (Kuzio 2000: 99). President Karimov, therefore, clarified his public position, by classifying GUAM as a promising trade opportunity: ‘Senator Sam Brownback, who wants to gather together some six or seven countries linked to the Silk Road and find out our attitude to that law (...) What is the aim of that organization? GUAM is an organization of states around the Black Sea. From the point of view of communications and routes we are eager to reach that region and the world market in general. Our joining GUAM will help us greatly in achieving that our goal.’³¹⁰ Joining the organization, though, barely had any impact in the international public sphere and Uzbekistan suspended its membership from the organization in 2002, perhaps because no new economic opportunities came about.

The growing importance of the ‘island of stability’

By December 1995, Uzbekistani forces alongside Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan’s began addressing multi-lateral security and, a few months later, created the Central Asian Battalion (CENTRASBAT). The measure was supported by Washington, as CENTRASBAT participated in several American-sponsored security exercises in the late 1990s.³¹¹

On the security front, therefore, Tashkent was gradually regarded as a reliable ‘protector of stability’ by the DoD, especially after the Taliban threat became more visible. The Clinton Administration favoured President Karimov’s proposal for brokering a settlement for the Afghan conflict in late 1998 (Akbarzadeh 2005: 45), effectively bolstering President Karimov’s role as *voice for a non-militaristic Central Asia*. His approach became known as the 6+2, consisting of the United States and Russia in addition to Afghanistan’s six regional neighbours (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Iran and China), all of whom were supposed to meet periodically and find solutions for Afghanistan’s civil war.

Still, the main spark for greater bilateral engagement came in August 1998, when American Embassies in Tanzania and Kenya were bombed by Al Qaida. A few months later, in February 1999, Tashkent was also subjected to an attack and so

³¹⁰ ‘Uzbek President Repeats Line on Nato, Kosovo ó Full Version’ *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 23 April 1999.

³¹¹ Tashkent’s participation in American sponsored security schemes facilitated the creation of the Central Asian battalion (CENTRASBAT) in December 1995, consisting of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. The first CENTRASBAT military exercise was organized in Fort Bragg in 1997 (Marat 2010: 105-107). The last CENTRASBAT exercise to be organized was in 2000, but both Uzbekistani and Kyrgyz forces did not attend it because of the IMU’s incursions during that summer.

compatibility over *protecting stability* was on the rise as President Clinton sent a letter of support to his Uzbekistani counterpart.³¹²

Thereafter, Uzbekistani military forces were compelled to face IMU mobilization in 1999³¹³ and Washington began assisting Central Asia strengthen its borders. The strategic significance of the region was increasing and the DoD took even further action by deciding to group the Central Asian security complex within the wider Middle East, thereby transferring responsibilities from European Command (EUCOM) to Central Command (CENTCOM) (Blank 2001: 138).

Roles converged further in 2000, after a second IMU operation near Uzbekistan's border, where a number of American mountain climbers were taken hostage. Washington responded swiftly and officially designated the IMU a terrorist organization.³¹⁴ Tashkent too continued reinforcing its role of *protector of stability* in the region and, in that same year, took steps to apprehend Iranian cargo vehicles carrying radioactive material.³¹⁵

Despite Uzbekistan's stability, controversy over Human Rights remained

With Uzbekistan's increased visibility, President Karimov's roles would face greater scrutiny in the public sphere. Growing reliability in *protecting of stability* was not enough to detract Washington from its pro-democracy roles, even more so as intra-role conflict increased. This growing problem was well reflected in a speech made by Strobe Talbott, in 1997, the Deputy Secretary of State. The statement was appropriately named 'Farewell to Flashman' – an allusion to a fictional Great Game character – and argued in favour of pushing for reform, security and profitable economic relations in Central Asia, without, however, upsetting Russia or ignoring human rights (Rumer 2007: 29-30). These goals, as worthy as they may seem, somewhat contradicted the overall *realpolitik* of Senator Brownback's Silk Road strategy, approved by Congress in 1999, and designed to offset Russia (see above). Washington's intra-role conflict was thus on

³¹² For the news report detailing President Clinton's letter, see: 'U.S., French leaders send letters of condolence to Uzbekistan' *Interfax Russian News*, 18 February 1999.

³¹³ Uzbekistan received a number of American jeeps to help secure its borders in February 1999. Further transport supplies and night-vision hardware were later delivered. See 'Uzbek-US agreement on military cooperation for year 2000 signed' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 7 December 1999 and 'Uzbekistan intends to intensify Military Cooperation with America' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 2 February 2000.

³¹⁴ The IMU was designated a terrorist group in 2000 and again in 2002: 'Redesignation of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan as a Foreign Terrorist Organization' *Department of State*, September 25 2002, available at <http://web.archive.org/web/20070816051117/http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2002/13708.htm>, accessed September 2010.

³¹⁵ See the comments made by Secretary of State Albright commending Uzbekistan's actions in the security field: 'Albright praises vigilant Uzbek customs' *United Press International*, 19 April 2000.

the rise and diverging positions were also enounced by some experts of the region, such as Martha Brill Olcott and Zbigniew Brzezinski.³¹⁶

Although pressure for reform persisted, President Karimov did not compromise publicly on his *undisputed authority* and *seeking genuine independence*. Instead, he showed increasing wariness toward American lecturing, particularly after his first meeting with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright: 'I did not like what she said and had to state my own view (...) I asked her a question: I asked her who best knew the state of affairs in the USA. In astonishment, she said that they Americans did. Who, I asked, best knows the state of affairs in Uzbekistan? Of course, we ourselves do.'³¹⁷ In another incident in 2000, he also criticized the DoS for worrying more about journalists who covered the Chechen conflict than the lives of the Russians and Chechens.³¹⁸

Whereas Tashkent reached compatibility with Washington on its security policy, role conflict increased with the DoS over democracy promotion and economic reform, which became more visible during the Secretary of State's trip to Uzbekistan in April 2000. The visit very much bolstered President Karimov's *prestige* and credibility as a *protector of stability*, given that Secretary Albright recognized the efficacy of Uzbekistan's border policy.³¹⁹ Still, political reform was also discussed out in the open, resulting in a number of public disagreements. In a news conference hosted jointly by the Secretary of State and the Uzbekistani Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdulaziz Komilov, Ms Albright stated that President Karimov 'took on board the issues that I raised, he disagreed with me and I disagree with him and we will continue to make our case and we will continue to follow events here very carefully.'³²⁰ The Minister retorted that 'we can participate and have a dialogue. At the same time to some extent this also causes doubts among us and we, I'll be very frank with you, cannot accept it.'³²¹ The discussion persisted as Secretary Albright underlined her point: 'I expressed (...) that it was necessary for the government of Uzbekistan to distinguish very carefully between peaceful devout believers and those who advocate terrorism or violent political

³¹⁶ For transcripts of their recommendations to the Senate, see 'Senate Foreign Relations Committee international economic policy, export and trade promotion subcommittee hearing regarding Caspian Sea oil' *Federal News Service*, 18 July 1998.

³¹⁷ 'Refile Uzbek Head: 'We have to think about NATO Membership' Full Version' *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 1 May 1999.

³¹⁸ 'Uzbek leader criticizes US for 'game over' Radio Liberty reporter: full version' *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 11 February 2000.

³¹⁹ See some of Secretary Albright's praise in the following news report: 'Albright praises vigilant Uzbek customs' *United Press International*, 19 April 2000.

³²⁰ 'Albright presses unconvinced Uzbek leader on human rights' *Agence France Presse & English*, 18 April 2000.

³²¹ *Ibid.*

change.’³²² Mr Komilov then replied that ‘Uzbekistan was more than 80 percent Islamic and that the government knows how to tell good Muslims from bad.’³²³

Other similar statements made by American personnel demonstrated incompatibility, thus affecting President Karimov’s credibility in defending *Uzbekistan’s image*. For instance, one member of Secretary Albright’s delegation publicly stated that ‘we hope they [the Uzbekistani government] get the message: treat Muslims as they do the Jews.’³²⁴ The official was referring to Tashkent’s tolerance for Bukharan Jews as opposed to Muslims. American pressure, therefore, wasn’t withered by President Karimov’s brief rhetorical concessions a few months before the visit, in which he confessed the wish to one day have Uzbekistan become a democracy.³²⁵

V.3. The Strategic Partnership 2002-2005: A relationship that never was

After 11 September 2001, Uzbekistan was under the spotlight of the war on terror. President Karimov’s public credibility as a *protector of stability* was greatly boosted and his misgivings toward terrorism were now part of the discourse of the international public sphere (see Chapter III). Moreover, being visible meant that President Karimov could, in theory, enhance his country’s *prestige* and the roles of *developer* and *technocratic expert*. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware that greater engagement with Washington meant that Uzbekistan’s internal affairs would be under greater scrutiny. Still, Tashkent seems to have embraced the relationship’s new dimension, albeit in its typical discrete and reclusive manner.

The new momentum after 11 September 2001

President Karimov quickly voiced support for Washington’s fight against the Taliban and³²⁶, according to the press, spoke on 19 September with President George Bush on the phone.³²⁷ For some of Washington’s officials, greater cooperation with the Central Asian Republics came as a surprise, even if engagement with that part of the world was

³²² Ibid

³²³ Ibid

³²⁴ ‘Albright visits Uzbek hospital, calls for religious tolerance’ *Agence France Presse ó English*, 18 2000.

³²⁵ President Karimov had argued that. ‘I sincerely dream about a working system of checks and balances like in advanced and civilized countries both in the East and the West where people can work within the system.’ See ‘Uzbek president says democratic mechanisms not working yet’ *BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 9 January 2000.

³²⁶ See a statement by President Karimov offering support in ‘Uzbekistan ready to discuss cooperation with US’ *Agence France Presse ó English*, 17 September 2001.

³²⁷ On Uzbekistan’s initial engagement with the United States after 11 September, see ‘Karimov, Bush discuss Uzbek-US interaction in various areas’ *TASS*, 19 September 2001.

far from being novel.³²⁸

As negotiations proceeded for the provision of a new military base, a number of obstacles came to the forefront. Being a secretive protector of *stability*, President Karimov divulged little information to the media, which led to correspondence problems with American officials. For instance, despite Washington's confirmation that military forces arrived in Uzbekistan,³²⁹ Mr Karimov denied the report, although he later acknowledged that he would allow Washington to use some facilities.³³⁰

Another problem surfaced due to President Karimov's role of *non-militarism*. Uzbekistan's President insisted that the Karshi-Khanabad (K-2) base (also known as Camp Stronghold Freedom) was only to be used for 'humanitarian purposes' (Cooley 2009: 118). Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, visited Uzbekistan in the beginning of October to broker an agreement, but ended up conceding that the base was just for humanitarian operations.³³¹ The outcome of negotiations was apparently unsatisfactory and so CENTCOM General Tommy Franks visited Uzbekistan a few weeks later to request the deployment of troops for attacking the Taliban. However, Tashkent's position did not shift and Mr Rumsfeld returned to Uzbekistan's capital for another attempt.³³² In the end, the efforts came to no avail and K-2's status remained for humanitarian purposes.

Further American frustration came out regarding Tashkent's reluctance to open the southern border with Afghanistan.³³³ This time, the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, personally visited Uzbekistan in December to broker an agreement. The meeting between both was inconclusive. Reports claimed that Uzbekistan's leader bargained for security guarantees and financial commitment, whereas Secretary Powell remained

³²⁸ Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz confessed in June 2003 that 'if I had ever gone to the Congress in June of 2001 and said we needed money to base forces in Karshi-Khanabad, the first thing is we'd all have to get our maps out and discover that that's in Uzbekistan and having discovered that they'd say what on earth do you want forces there for?' Also, In light of the new era on foreign policy, the Senate Foreign Relations panel created a subcommittee on South Caucasus and Central Asia in October 2001. For Paul Wolfowitz's quotation, see 'Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz Town Hall with U.S. Troops in Korea' *U.S. Department of Defense*, 1 June 2003, available at <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=2708>, accessed September 2012.

³²⁹ On Washington's initial military involvement, see 'US military aircraft land in Uzbekistan: Uzbek source' *Agence France Presse ó English*, 22 September 2001.

³³⁰ See President Karimov's first denial in 'Uzbekistan Refutes Arrival of US Military Transport Aircraft' *RIA Novosti*, 24 September 2001. Those were not the only reported problems. For example, according to the *Washington Post*, after the US officials corroborated the arrival of the 10th Mountain Division in mid-October, an Uzbekistani foreign ministry spokesman insisted that only a few hundred American troops were in the country (Ricks & Glasser 2001).

³³¹ 'US, Uzbekistan confirm deal on anti-terror military cooperation' *Agence France Presse ó English*, 12 October 2001.

³³² 'US defense chief in tour of Afghanistan's neighbours' *Agence France Presse ó English*, 3 November 2001 and 'US Senators to negotiate with Uzbek leaders in Uzbekistan' *Ria Novosti*, 20 November 2001.

³³³ On negotiations for opening the border, see the following report: 'Rocky start for U.S., Uzbek relations' *United Press International*, 20 December 2001.

reluctant to concede much.³³⁴ In the end, the bridge opened, but this new stage in the relationship revealed how role compatibility was far from being a fact. Washington publicly acknowledged President Karimov as a regional provider of *stability* and had practical military goals to achieve. However, American pro-democratic roles also meant that it could not fully relinquish its public misgivings over Uzbekistan's government. For example, just a few weeks before visiting Uzbekistan, Secretary Powell was asked by a Senator how he would deal with a regime that 'crushes its own people.'³³⁵ This statement demonstrated intra-role conflict, once more, and, at the time, Senator Sam Brownback retorted by changing the subject-matter and arguing that the regime had actually been a reliable partner.³³⁶ These polarized perspectives would eventually permeate the American press. Indeed, during Secretary Rumsfeld's first visit to Uzbekistan, Mr Karimov was required to respond to journalists. Standing next to the Defense Secretary, he was questioned about the political environment in his country, to which he replied that freedom was not rampant and cautioned those present that the United States had taken two hundred years to become a full democracy.³³⁷

Such statements reflecting President Karimov's role of *undisputed authority* strained the bilateral relationship. Consequently, the Bush administration was somewhat at odds with how to position itself: either fully support the regime or remain critical of its questionable political practices. In practice, the message conveyed in the public sphere was mixed, as evinced in a number of early statements. For instance, the DoS showed concern with Uzbekistan's 2002 referendum on extending the Presidential term from five to seven years, but also thanked Tashkent for its support. Moreover, Richard Boucher of the DoS publicly warned that the nationwide poll might not fulfil international standards (Lee 2002), and then the Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs briefed the press on Uzbekistan's lagging reforms, while also recognizing Tashkent's contribution to the war in Afghanistan.³³⁸

The Unrealistic Strategic Partnership Declaration

A new hallmark for Uzbekistani-American relations occurred in March 2002 when the

³³⁴ For more speculation on the negotiations between President Karimov and Secretary Colin Powell, see 'Uzbek president says 1,500 US troops in Uzbekistan' *Agence France Presse ó English*, 6 December 2001.

³³⁵ 'Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Subject, chaired by Senator Joe Biden' *Federal News Service*, 25 October 2001.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ On President Karimov's comments, see 'Uzbek leader reports on 5 October talks with US defence secretary' *ó TV' BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 7 October 2001.

³³⁸ For a transcript of her briefing, see 'Special State Department Briefing' *Federal News Service*, 11 February 2002.

two parties signed a 'Declaration on the Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Framework.' President Karimov obtained commitment from the world's predominant superpower and a significant boost to *Uzbekistan's image*. He then paid a quick visit to Washington DC where he signed the agreement, recognizing the event as something 'numerous countries want to establish'.³³⁹

The declaration in itself encompassed five general Articles, wherein the first, third and fifth specified Washington's conditions for political and economic reforms, such as implementing convertibility. Nonetheless, the main principle of cooperation entailed 'respect for international law, sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and non-interference in each others' internal affairs.' Typically, respect for sovereignty is stipulated in international agreements but, given the scope of reform envisioned in the declaration, that guarantee effectively relaxed Tashkent's obligation to satisfy Washington's external pressure. In fact, the document did not have any binding clauses, inasmuch as it did not specify regulatory mechanisms or deadlines on how or when Tashkent was to pursue reform. This meant, in short, that President Karimov obtained *prestige* from a formal partnership and could, at the same time, condone goals that may have affected the credibility of his roles: 'we have signed a declaration on strategic partnership with the USA and on the fundamentals of relations between Uzbekistan and the USA. The document was drawn up by both sides, although, in practice, most of it was proposed by us. It has many components (...) Nothing is dictated: if we are doing something, we are doing it because it is in the interests of our present generation and the one that is coming.'³⁴⁰

As concerns Washington, the declaration meant that its pro-democratic roles were taken into account, without having to offer binding security guarantees. Washington's obligations were only detailed in Article Two, which recognized that the United States would consider 'with grave concern any external threat to the security and territorial integrity of the Republic of Uzbekistan.'

In spite of the rise in *prestige*, by signing the treaty President Karimov opened himself toward a crisis of public credibility. That perhaps explains why the Partnership Declaration was kept confidential and revealed only a few months later by the DoS.³⁴¹ Nevertheless, President Karimov remained a reliable partner on issues that did not contradict his roles. He gave his public support for the Bush Administrations' struggle

³³⁹ -Uzbek president to sign six documents in U.S.ø*New Bulletin*, 11 March 2002.

³⁴⁰ -Uzbek leader stresses common interests with Japaneseø*BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 2 August 2002.

³⁴¹ According to Lewis (2008:17) the exact reasons for why the document was only revealed to the public in July remain unknown.

against terror,³⁴² and its war against Saddam Hussein.³⁴³ Concessions on reform, though, still lagged and so President Karimov remained consistent with his roles of *technocratic* and *undisputed authority*. In fact, just a few months after signing the declaration, he proclaimed that he was not up for ‘democratic fundamentalism’: ‘Uzbekistan has always been against all forms of radicalism (...) We are against religious fundamentalism, we are against Communist fundamentalism and, if you like, we are against democratic fundamentalism. We are for an evolutionary path of development.’³⁴⁴

Some concessions

It is important to be aware that, while no major reforms were taken, some modest changes were implemented. As a supposed *technocratic expert* and *de-ideologized leader*, focusing on convertibility was not a significant disadvantage to his public credibility. As such, he agreed to sign a letter of intent with the IMF in January 2002 (Rumer 2002: 18-20) and, in October 2003, announced full convertibility (Blackmon 2003: 391). On political reform, no major institutional changes occurred. Yet, President Karimov did allow for the legalization of several human rights organizations throughout 2002 and abolished Uzbekistan’s main censorship body (Ilkhamov 2005a: 299; Lewis 2008: 19).³⁴⁵ He also announced the opening of an Institute of Studies of Civil Society as part of his own Presidential apparatus (Kandiyoti 2007: 40-44).³⁴⁶

Limelight, Openness and Growing Criticism

Despite greater openness, President Karimov still had to face the consequences of his roles and of the criticism he had been receiving since the early 1990s. Amid reports about the use of torture, Mr Karimov was pressured to allow UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Theo Van Boven, visit the country. Uzbekistani officials acceded in December

³⁴² On support for the global war on terror, see ‘Uzbek president comments on Afghan issue’ text, *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 5 October 2002.

³⁴³ On President Karimov’s comments regarding the war in Iraq, see ‘Uzbekistan ready to support US on Iraq: Karimov’, *Agence France Presse & English*, 6 March 2003.

³⁴⁴ ‘Uzbek leader stresses common interests with Japanese’, *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 2 August 2002.

³⁴⁵ He did not prevent the opposition party *Erk* - whose leaders had been persecuted and forced to seek exile during the 1990s - to have its first political conference in Tashkent in June 2003 (Akbarzadeh 2005: 90). President Karimov also published a law on public funds, which effectively legalized a number of NGOs (Ilkhamov 2005: 298).

³⁴⁶ As restrictions loosened, Voice of America (VOA) launched its first reports in Uzbek to a number of affiliates in December 2003. See ‘USA/Uzbekistan: VOA debuts Uzbek-language television reports’, *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 15 December 2003.

2002, yet Mr Van Boven's report strongly condemned the regime.³⁴⁷ Uzbekistan's government would also have to face more disparaging accounts made by NGOs, which described the use of child labour in cotton fields and other persistent human rights violations.³⁴⁸

As reports condemned the regime, President Karimov's public credibility as an *undisputed leader* and an *economic developer* was put into question. One such case took place in May 2003, during a European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) conference in Tashkent. President Karimov took part in the meeting, which was filmed live by Uzbekistan's television broadcaster. This decision proved to be a mistake because he was subjected to rampant criticism.³⁴⁹ His frustration was actually quite observable when he took his headphones off midway through the conference (Lewis 2008: 35).

Another damaging humiliation to his public credibility occurred in the beginning of 2003. The United States Congress attached a clause for all funds being transferred to Uzbekistan, aiming to halt American financial assistance if the Secretary of State did not declare officially that Tashkent was making progress on reform (Daly et al. 2005: 84). Even more problematic though was that Congress decided to give Kazakhstan a waiver (Ibid: 24, 84), thereby disparaging *Uzbekistan's image* and leading President Karimov to confess, in late 2003, dissatisfaction with the level of external criticism.³⁵⁰

The Impact of the Colour Revolutions

Soon after Georgia's 2003 Rose Revolution, President Karimov warned about the potential for instability: 'first, all the events which are taking place in every country, including Georgia, are the internal affair of a country and the internal affairs of the people living in that country. I consider any outside interference, any attempt to exercise control over these processes or impact on it to be inefficient.'³⁵¹

In December 2003, the Cabinet of Ministers quickly reacted and adopted resolution no. 543 calling for all international organizations to re-register (Ilkhamov

³⁴⁷ See the full report in 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the question of torture, Theo van Boven, submitted in accordance with Commission resolution 2002/38 available at: [http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/0/29d0f1eaf87cf3eac1256ce9005a0170/\\$FILE/G0310766.pdf](http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/0/29d0f1eaf87cf3eac1256ce9005a0170/$FILE/G0310766.pdf), accessed August 2012.

³⁴⁸ See for example 'Uzbek Children in South used as slave labour for cotton harvest - opposition' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 14 September 2002.

³⁴⁹ See the following report 'EBRD Conference Opens Under Cloud over Human-Rights Scandal' *World Markets Analysis*, 5 May 2003.

³⁵⁰ 'Uzbek leader lashes out at rights bodies over criticism of neighbourhood system' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 7 December 2003.

³⁵¹ 'Uzbek president urges Georgians to abide by constitution' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 24 November 2003.

2005a: 300).³⁵² A few months later, more measures were taken as President Karimov demanded the closure of OSI's office in Tashkent (Ibid: 313), by stating that it had violated the law.³⁵³ This incident did not pass unnoticed and the DoS threatened that not renewing OSI registration would affect American assistance to Uzbekistan.³⁵⁴ Tashkent, therefore, made a concession in May, as it acceded to a DoS request to open an international inquiry into the death of an Uzbekistani inmate.³⁵⁵ It was later found that the prisoner had died by hanging and that there were no signs of actual torture being applied. Ironically, though, in that same month, British Ambassador to Uzbekistan, Craig Murray, publicly criticized the Human Rights record of Uzbekistan's government, accusing it of systematically using torture.³⁵⁶

Insecurity and the Snub by Congress

While President Karimov revamped his *undisputed authority*, Mr Powell took action in July 2004 by declaring that he would no longer certify that Uzbekistan was carrying out reforms. The penalization could not have occurred at a more difficult time in the two countries' relations, since both had been negotiating K-2's terms of payment (Daly et al. 2005: 23-25). Indeed, John Daly's et al. (2005) detailed account later revealed the degree to which Tashkent had been pushing for financial commitment. In light of the war on terror, President Karimov's position was not entirely unreasonable (see Table 3 below). Uzbekistan was hosting an American military base juxtaposed to Afghanistan, but received less aid per capita than its two Central Asian neighbours.³⁵⁷ Also, when compared to other authoritarian partners of the United States, especially Egypt, Uzbekistan obtained a lot less aid.³⁵⁸ Hence, in terms of Uzbekistan's *image* and *international equality*, the discrepancy negatively affected President Karimov's credibility.

³⁵² Other restrictions on NGOs and political liberties were imposed throughout 2004. See Alisher Ilkhamov's (2005) excellent article for more on the subject.

³⁵³ -Excerpts from Uzbek president's speech in parliament on 29 April BBC *Summary of World Broadcasts*, 30 April 2004.

³⁵⁴ OSI was not the only NGO to be targeted and Uzbekistani officials accused other organizations of fomenting discontent. See: -US says Uzbekistan aid threatened by closure of Soros Office Agence *France Presse ó English*, 24 April 2004.

³⁵⁵ -US asks for probe into case of death by torture in Uzbekistan Agence *France Presse ó English*, 22 May 2004.

³⁵⁶ See a number of critiques in -European elections observers: Uzbek election fell far short of democratic standards The *Associated Press*, 27 December 2005 and -Uzbekistan, Parliamentary Elections, 26 December 2004; Final Report OSCE, March 2005, available at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/uzbekistan/41950>, accessed September 2012.

³⁵⁷ Kyrgyzstan hosted the Manas airbase but shared no border with Afghanistan. On the other hand, Kazakhstan was relatively far from Afghanistan and has never hosted an American military base.

³⁵⁸ Martha Olcott (2007), during a hearing at the House of Representatives in 2007, made the same point that Tashkent's concerns were being not taken seriously.

Table 3: United States Aid in Thousands of Dollars ³⁵⁹						Total United States Aid (2001- 2005) per capita
	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total	
Uzbekistan	30,599	160,405	52,937	38,442	282,383	9.95
Kazakhstan	51,189	57,867	51,296	41,867	202,219	11.54
Kyrgyzstan	36,353	84,652	46,316	7,291	174,612	31.77
Egypt	199,2053	130,5106	220,6131	186,7652	7,370942	88.08
Pakistan	132,852	105,0128	502,144	400,441	2,085565	0.09

Conflicts within Washington over Uzbekistan

With Tashkent facing increased pressure, Washington's intra-role also conflict escalated, in that many influential individuals didn't agree with Uzbekistan being penalized. Air Force General Richard Myers commented that Congress was being short-sighted in cutting aid to a pivotal partner.³⁶⁰ Some other American academics and analysts also argued that many of the portrayals of the regime were biased and that it had actually been a reliable collaborator - opinions which were expressed in a seminar hosted in Washington in October 2004.³⁶¹ Without a doubt, President Karimov's compliance to the issue of *protecting regional stability* was not wholly forgotten - a role which was again reinforced in September 2004, when Tashkent abided to the Global Threat Initiative, becoming the first CIS country to return unused nuclear fuel to Russia. President Bush, according to the press, expressed his gratitude with an official letter to President Karimov.³⁶² The relationship, however, was already mired by the exacerbated role conflict.

V.4. The Andijan Spark: The final deterioration in relations

Role incompatibilities triggered a gradual change in President Karimov's rhetoric, which began focusing more on *defending Uzbekistan's image and cultural authenticity*. By the end of 2004, Uzbekistan's President became more incisive in differentiating his country's supposed eastern culture from the West (see Chapter III).

³⁵⁹ Data obtained from 'Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations' available at: <http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/rls/cbj/>, accessed August 2012.

³⁶⁰ 'U.S. Opposed Calls at NATO for Probe of Uzbek Killings; Officials Feared Losing Air Base Access' *Washington Post*, 14 June 2005.

³⁶¹ 'US Experts Hail Uzbekistan Policy on Foreign Religious Freedom' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 20 October 2004. See also Frederick Starr's support for Uzbekistan's efforts: 'US academic offers support for Uzbek terror policy' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 25 April 2004.

³⁶² 'US hails Uzbekistan's return of highly enriched uranium to Russia' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 22 September 2004.

While the Orange Revolution took place in Ukraine, he consistently underlined the dangers of stability and of importing different models of government: ‘we know that at all times revolutions are usually based on violence and bloodshed, and they are used as weapons to destroy everything created by the ancestors mercilessly (...) We are confident that it is impossible to export democracy and different models of open societies. It is also impossible to import or push through a universal project of state construction from outside’³⁶³

Although President Karimov had expressed similar themes during the 1990s, his *undisputed authority* was gradually basing itself more on *cultural authenticity* than *technocracy* (see Chapter III). As such, he argued in January 2005 that events like those in Ukraine and Georgia would not take place in his country: ‘I doubt that a repetition of the Ukrainian or Georgian scenario would be possible in Uzbekistan. The reason is not that I, as the head of state, would oppose this prospect. The citizens themselves would not want this, and that is much more important.’³⁶⁴ A few months later, however, organized insurgents in Andijan would prove President Karimov wrong.

The Andijan Uprising: Western Responses and the Eviction from K-2

Depictions of the 13 May 2005 events are available from many sources, but given Uzbekistan’s habit of secrecy it is difficult to obtain consistent accounts (see Chapter III). A few days after the incident, on 16 May, a Department of State spokesman condemned the indiscriminate use of force.³⁶⁵ Afterwards, the new Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, expressed her own concern and called on Uzbekistani authorities to focus more on Human Rights.³⁶⁶ Other Western international responses were, however, less restrained. Soon after the uprising, British foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, called for an immediate international inquiry.³⁶⁷

Amid demands for an international investigation and the increased public spotlight, President Karimov reinforced his roles of *defender of equality* and *seeker of genuine independence*, by insisting that his country was sovereign and perfectly capable of carrying out its own internal investigation.³⁶⁸ With criticism coming from

³⁶³ ‘New Uzbek Parliament Part of Democratic Nation-Building ó President’ *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 29 January 2005.

³⁶⁴ ‘Uzbek president issues robust defence of elections’ *BBC Summary of World Broadcast*, 27 December 2004.

³⁶⁵ ‘Uzbek leader accepts U.S. statements on Andizhan events’ *Interfax News Agency*, 17 May 2005.

³⁶⁶ ‘Secretary Rice Defends U.S. Approach to Uzbekistan on Human Rights’ *US Fed News*, 18 May 2005.

³⁶⁷ Also, in May 19, the United States Senate Helsinki commission chaired by Senator Brownback convened to discuss the situation in Uzbekistan. See ‘EU urges Uzbek authorities to rein in military clampdown on population’ *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 17 May 2005.

³⁶⁸ ‘Uzbek leader says no international probe into Andijon crisis ó Fuller’ *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 25 May 2005.

other international organizations, such as the OSCE, Mr Karimov galvanized his *authenticity* rhetoric, implying that such institutions were unable to evaluate Eastern states:

Uzbekistan is in Asia and let everyone remember this. We are members of not only the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, but we are members of Islamic states' organizations as well (...) This is why, on the one hand you are exerting pressure from Europe, and you are forgetting, for example, take Ukraine, it is in Europe, or Georgia, it is also in Europe. Where is Uzbekistan [sic]? Look at the map. Is Uzbekistan, the city of Tashkent, not the gate of the East? (...) We are proud of being from the East.³⁶⁹

As the events continued to be debated in the international public sphere, many western officials required a better explanation into what had happened.³⁷⁰ Subsequently, three American senators (one of which was former Presidential Candidate John McCain) followed up on the role of defending Human Rights, by flying to Tashkent and demanding a meeting with President Karimov. Their efforts, though, were of no avail since Uzbekistan's head of state completely ignored the delegation.³⁷¹ Moreover, Uzbekistan's government took the additional step of rejecting a VISA to the aid of the High Representative of the European Union.³⁷²

The DoD, in particular, was publicly concerned with how events were spiralling out of control and how this could affect its relationship with Tashkent. This concern was made public when news came out that Mr Rumsfeld blocked a NATO declaration condemning Uzbekistan's government.³⁷³

The relationship was now at an all-time low and, in June 2005, Tashkent forbade American night-time flights to K-2.³⁷⁴ Then, at the end of July, after the situation reached a stalemate, Uzbekistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs demanded the eviction of United States military forces,³⁷⁵ a decision that was then approved by Uzbekistan's Senate in August.³⁷⁶

³⁶⁹ Ibid..

³⁷⁰ In order to clamp down the pressure, Uzbekistani authorities gave some concessions and allowed foreign diplomats and scholars to visit Andijan, albeit under tight supervision (Akiner 2005).

³⁷¹ See a report on the visit and President Karimov's response in 'Three US senators visit Uzbekistan, push for international probe' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 29 May 2005.

³⁷² See 'EU/Uzbekistan: European Union angered by Refusal of Visa for Solana Aide' *EU European Report*, 11 June 2005.

³⁷³ See 'U.S. Opposed Calls at NATO for Probe of Uzbek Killings; Officials Feared Losing Air Base Access' *Washington Post*, 14 June 2005.

³⁷⁴ 'Uzbekistan restricts US military's use of air base' *Agence France Presse ó English*, 15 June 2005.

³⁷⁵ 'Uzbekistan demands withdrawal of US mil base' *TASS*, 30 July 2005.

³⁷⁶ 'Uzbek lawmakers ratify US military eviction, seek compensation' *Agence France Presse ó English* 26 August 2005.

As a last token of goodwill, Mr Rumsfeld publicly acknowledged Uzbekistan's *stability* and reliability, by agreeing to reimburse Tashkent with 23 million dollars, despite a congressional attempt to block the transaction (Daly et al. 2005: 37).³⁷⁷ This last gesture, while not preventing American troops from being evicted, expounded a degree of inter-role compatibility. In light of the fact that role convergence practically only existed between the DoD and Tashkent, this action may have left some channels of communication open. However, in the meanwhile, President Karimov came down hard on all the groups with connections to Washington's political and democratic agendas.³⁷⁸ So, in a last ditch effort to downplay the level of friction,³⁷⁹ a DoS representative visited Uzbekistan in August 2006, but obtained little success. Although at the time Uzbekistan's leader confessed that the visit was an opportunity for improving relations, the two parties admitted that only on *protecting stability* was rapprochement and cooperation possible.³⁸⁰

V.5. Reigniting relations: the importance of security

After Mr Boucher's visit in August 2006, public high-level contacts between Washington and Tashkent ceased for nearly a year and a half. Meanwhile, the DoS altered part of its organizational system and transferred Central Asian affairs to the South and Central Asian section, effectively removing the region from the Europe and Eurasian affairs division (Heathershaw 2007: 135). Curiously, the timing of the decision suggests that the DoS might have been influenced by President Karimov's claims that Uzbekistan was Eastern and not European.

³⁷⁷ Later, in a September visit led by the Assistant Secretary of State, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense and National Security Council senior staff, compensation to Tashkent was publicly confirmed, regardless of the eviction. 'U.S. Officials to Talk With Uzbek Leader', *The Washington Post*, 24 September 2005.

³⁷⁸ Counterpart International, the American Bar Association, the Eurasia Foundation and the Eurasian Law Initiative, were all forbidden from working in Uzbekistan. Then, in October 2005, the BBC was also forced to close its office in Tashkent.

³⁷⁹ After 2005, the EU responded to the political situation by placing an arms embargo and restricting the access of Uzbekistani government members to Europe. In Washington, Senator John McCain delivered a hard line speech at the Carnegie Endowment for Peace in 2006, condemning President Karimov. The Senate Helsinki Commission also convened in July 2006 to discuss the situation, inviting prominent Uzbekistani opposition members, such as the leaders of *Erk*, *Birlik* and the Sunshine Coalition to offer their points of view. Overall, Uzbekistan's leadership was strongly condemned in the European and American public spheres.

³⁸⁰ See an account of the tense meeting in 'US, Uzbek Views on human rights, Andijon differ', official *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 9 August 2006.

Interaction after 2007

With conflict in Afghanistan increasing, *protecting stability* in the region became again a prominent role (Blank 2011). Indeed, the discontinuity may have ignited an adjustment, in December 2007, when President Karimov asserted that discord with Washington was something of the past: 'there are still those who assert that today some discord still continues between Uzbekistan and the United States of America, on the one hand, and the European states, on the other. It is not difficult to understand that they would want such discord to exist from which they would draw a particular interest.'³⁸¹ CENTCOM Admiral, William Fallon, then visited Tashkent, on January 2008, to discuss opening a new supply route to Afghanistan via Uzbekistan.³⁸² The meeting seems to have ended on a positive note since a NATO official announced in March that Tashkent had allowed supplies to cross Uzbekistani territory.³⁸³ Subsequently, a new stage in the two countries' relations was signalled after President Karimov went to a NATO summit in Bucharest on April 2008.³⁸⁴ The EU reciprocated by also mitigating its official condemnation and removing sanctions targeting Uzbekistani officials (for more on the EU's position, see Chapter VI).³⁸⁵

President Karimov downplayed his *authenticity*-based roles and focused more on *technocracy* (see Chapter III). In other words, the discontinuity brought by discrete American rapprochement and the global economic crisis in 2008 allowed for a return to his *technocratic* rhetoric, leading to inter-role compatibility, and less *authenticity*-based remonstrations against the West.

Concessions and the Security Relationship that followed

Rapprochement though was not immediate, given how the relationship had deteriorated heavily after 2005. Still, *protecting stability* was clearly the issue with which both sides converged,³⁸⁶ and so President Karimov made a rhetorical adjustment

³⁸¹ -Uzbek President's address dedicated to 15th anniversary of Constitutionø *UzReport.com*, 11 December 2007.

³⁸² -US-Uzbekistan Relations: Another Step Toward Rapprochementø *Eurasianet.org*, 23 January 2008.

³⁸³ -NATO says US, other members to use air base to resupply Afghanistanø *The Associated Press*, 5 March 2008.

³⁸⁴ -Uzbek President Calls for Resumption of Peace Talksø *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 3 April 2008.

³⁸⁵ -EU eases Uzbek sanctions despite reporter's jailingø *BBC Monitoring World Media*, 15 October 2008.

³⁸⁶ President Karimov called for the implementation of a renewed 6+3 summit during the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest (calling for NATO to also become a participant). -Uzbek leader says Afghan situation has -extremelyø negative impact on securityø *BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 8 October 2008.

with a call for reform. On January 2008, the death penalty was officially abolished and a civil rights activist was released from prison.³⁸⁷

Nevertheless, the subject-area dominating the public sphere was the situation in Afghanistan, particularly as it became one of the major campaign slogans of American Presidential candidate Barak Obama. In 2009, the new CENTCOM commander, General David Petraeus, visited Uzbekistan twice, where he signed a security cooperation agreement with President Karimov.³⁸⁸ Washington continued lobbying for a Northern Distribution Network (NDN) as a major supply route to Afghanistan, without referring much to the Human Rights situation.³⁸⁹ Apparently, it was now the DoD that was taking the initiative in the region, at least in the public sphere.

So, the stage was set for a level of rapprochement and security cooperation, which was evinced by the Secretary of State Hilary Clinton's visit to Uzbekistan in December 2010. Like in previous circumstances, President Karimov seems to have pre-empted the high-level visit with a long address to parliament proposing constitutional reform.³⁹⁰ Yet, given past rhetorical allusions to democracy, it is difficult to foresee Mr Karimov fully endorsing a close political connection. Indeed, what the twenty-year relationship showed is that only in *protecting stability* was there a degree of inter-role compatibility between the two governments.

³⁸⁷ See some of the concessions in the following account: 'Uzbekistan: Prominent rights activist Saidjahon Zainabidinov amnestied and released' *Ferghana.ru*, 5 February 2008.

³⁸⁸ See 'Uzbekistan, US sign agreement on military cooperation' *TASS*, 21 August 2009.

³⁸⁹ In that same year, the European Union removed its arms embargo, irrespective of the Human Rights situation remaining dubious. However, President Karimov did continue to make some concessions and gave amnesty to Sanjar Umarov, the leader of opposition movement, Sunshine Coalition, who had been imprisoned since 2005. Still, less tolerance was shown to some potential political adversaries, all of whom were imprisoned in May 2010 for having supposed connections to religious institutions. See 'Uzbekistan: Opposition figure's release signal of warming Uzbek-US Ties?' *Eurasianet.org*, 20 November 2009; and 'Uzbekistan: Journalist Khairullo Khamidov is sentenced to six years of prison' *Ferghana.ru*, 28 May 2010.

³⁹⁰ In a long speech, President Karimov called for the Prime Minister instead of the President to become head of government. Furthermore, he suggested that Speaker of the Senate was to become the second head of state, in case the President became incapable of fulfilling his duties. These measures brought some debate in the public sphere about the nature of President Karimov's intentions. Some argued that it was a concession designed to please the West, while others viewed it as a means of balancing rival factions. For the full speech, see 'Address by President Karimov at the joint session of Legislative Chamber and Senate' *UzReport.com*, November 15 2010. For an interpretation, read Sikorskaya's (2010) take on President Karimov's goals.

VI. The Uzbekistani-German Relationship 1991-2010

Tashkent's relationship with Berlin was relatively free from disturbance. Indeed, while quarrelling seems to have been the overarching feature of Uzbekistani relations with the United States and Russia, both Tashkent and Berlin were able to foster a degree of public cooperation from 1991 to 2010.

Discretion is the element that best describes the relationship, without this meaning that it was uneventful. Instead, both consistently engaged with each other from the outset and rarely made public outbursts that could damage their political connection. Germany was Uzbekistan's third major import partner (behind Russia and South Korea) throughout most of the 1990s³⁹¹ and also the only state that managed to keep its military personnel in Uzbekistan after the 2005 Andijan crisis. Still, the apparent lack of public conflict was not without controversy. In 2007, for example, an Uzbekistani dissident criticized Berlin's apparent pragmatism: 'once I went to the German embassy to ask about funding for a project. But the official said - if you were applying for a cultural project, like learning to play the dayra [a sort of drum], it would be fine, but you are asking for a human rights project.'³⁹²

Berlin focused on *stability* and showed a relatively strong commitment towards engaging with Uzbekistan's economy. Moreover, the fact that Germany's governments were advancing toward 'normality' (see below) resulted in relatively secluded interaction, inasmuch as President Karimov's *undisputed authority* was rarely questioned. As shown below, these instances of discrete engagement are reminiscent of Chancellor Willy Brandt's slogan of 'change through rapprochement' – 'wandel durch annäherung' (Kempe 2007), which only served to boost President Karimov's *technocratic* roles, such as fomenting *stability*. Role compatibility rather than conflict thus became the main feature of the relationship, even if after 2007 some friction became more systematic in the public spotlight.

As concerns Germany's roles, Paul Létorneau and Marie-Elisabeth Rakel (1997) observed that Berlin after the end of the Cold War dealt mainly with whether it could become a 'normal power'. In this regard, Dirk Peters (2001) illustrates the complexity of normality by showing that Berlin needed to balance assertiveness with the status of 'civilian power', i.e. constraining the use of force and promoting freedom. This dichotomy between assertion and being a civilian power, coupled by rhetoric of

³⁹¹ Germany became Uzbekistan's fourth major trade partner after being surpassed by China in the 21st century. See 'Uzbekistan' *Asian Development Bank: Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2011*, available at: <http://www.adb.org/publications/key-indicators-asia-and-pacific-2010>, accessed, November 2011.

³⁹² 'EU ministers to shy away from praising Uzbekistan' *EUobserver.com*, 18 April 2007.

constraint meant that prudence became one of the hallmarks of Germany's foreign policy. Similarly, Gunther Hellman (2001: 296; 297; 304) argued that Germany's government was striving for a degree of international prestige, although avoiding the label of great power. Max Otte and Jürgen Greve (2000: 10) also underlined the level of discretion in German foreign policy throughout the 1990s, insofar as it acted as a 'low-key leader and legitimate broker in the post-post war Europe'. Hence, while Berlin managed reunification, and as normality became more accepted, rhetoric changed gradually. Indeed, many other scholars demonstrated convincingly how Germany's military policy adapted to the new challenges and responsibilities of the international public sphere (Hyde-Price 2001; Noetzel 2011, 2008; Snyder 2011).

Berlin's involvement in Central Asia reflects well its changing foreign policy and the manners in which it balanced the assertiveness of its own interests with civilian roles. Consequently, inter-role conflict was not a significant feature of the relationship, even though it was on the rise after 2007, when Berlin was forced to justify its relationship with Tashkent to a variety of significant political actors, namely the *Bundestag*, the press and the European parliament.

VI.1. Uzbekistani-German Relations 1991-2000: Trade and Migration

As discussed in Chapter III, President Karimov's *technocratic* roles were very much open to receiving external investment. Consequently, Germany's economic success and its technological endowments were all attuned to President Karimov's appeals for *development* and seeking Uzbekistan's *genuine independence*. In an interview to a Russian newspaper, in 1993, he specifically outlined Germany as one country he had studied and whose model of state-run economic growth he admired: 'Germany and other countries, whose experience we are studying, then, of course, the state will not intervene in economic processes, which will run everywhere on the basis of the principle of supply and demand. But even in these countries a significant place is occupied by the public sector.'³⁹³

For its part, Berlin evinced that it was concerned with migration. Indeed, during the 1990s, Germany received around 1.64 million ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (Dietz 2000: 653). As such, calling for *stability* seemed the more likely approach, even more so when Berlin took an active policy in supporting its companies abroad. This public agenda was thus entirely compatible with President Karimov's roles of *protecting stability* and *developing Uzbekistan*.

³⁹³ -Uzbekistan; Karimov defends his policies against accusations of strong-arm tacticsøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 12 June 1993.

A Good Start: Germany shows concern for Germans in the former Soviet Union

Reinhard Krumm (2007: 9-10) argued that Berlin's initial policy for Central Asia envisaged *stability* at the forefront, as Germany quickly gave international recognition to the five Central Asian Republics (Ibid: 9-10). Apparently, it was Berlin's concern to convince counterparts that it lacked any kind of geopolitical ambitions (Ibid). A Russian 1995 article, however, counter-argued and claimed that Germany was hoping to become a leading power, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe (Pushkov 1995).

Speculation aside, German officials were at the time debating the future of their foreign policy (Peters 2001). In the short run, Berlin's concerns were apparently predicated by the scale of immigration, given that the admission of ethnic Germans was guaranteed by the 1949 German Constitution and also the Federal Expellee and Refugee Law of 1953 (Dietz 2000: 636). Uzbekistan had an important stake in that policy for nearly 40,000 ethnic Germans inhabited the Republic – a consequence of Stalin's 1941 deportation policies (Krumm 2007).³⁹⁴

Uzbekistan's President had committed himself to *technocratic* roles and especially *de-ideologized* politics. This meant that nationalistic agendas were mostly outside his rhetoric, although he did propound himself as a definer of *Uzbek authenticity*. Accordingly, he directed his public agenda toward *protecting stability* and *developing the economy* (see Chapter III) which were compatible with Berlin's concerns.

The apparent goodwill of both sides thus opened the way for President Karimov's first state visit to Germany in April 1993. The reliability with which the two states increasingly saw each other was symbolized by Tashkent returning an evangelical church to the German community in Uzbekistan, which was duly noted by President Richard Von Weizsaecker.³⁹⁵ Besides *prestige* and *stability*, the first visit also reinforced President Karimov's *technocratic* roles. Before travelling to Germany, Mr Karimov told the renowned magazine *Der Spiegel* 'that we Uzbeks are sitting on gold'.³⁹⁶ He met, therefore, with Chancellor Helmut Kohl and representatives of various

³⁹⁴ Kazakhstan, though, was the more relevant target of Germany's migration policy, given that nearly 100,000 ethnic Germans inhabited the country.

³⁹⁵ -German-Uzbek relations have good prospects: Weizsaecker to TASS, April 28 1993.

³⁹⁶ -Lichte Zukunft to *Der Spiegel*, 26 April 1993, available at <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13680695.html>, accessed September 2012..

German businesses,³⁹⁷ who all paid heed to President Karimov's appeals and prepared a law for 'Reciprocal Protection of Investments'.³⁹⁸

The press then reported that President Karimov was receptive to a lorry production project.³⁹⁹ Eventually, a joint venture between Daimler Mercedes and the state-run USSELCHOSMASCH - one of Uzbekistan's largest industrial enterprises, employing about 36,000 workers - quickly became operational.⁴⁰⁰ Investment in the field of technology fitted perfectly with President Karimov's public roles as a *mercantilist entrepreneur* and seeker of *genuine independence*. However, much like some American projects in the 1990s (see Chapter V), the initiative failed after producing only a hundred lorries. Apparently, errors in forecasting the costs of transportation prevented the project from being fully implemented.⁴⁰¹

Business as the motto of Uzbekistani-German relations in the 1990s

In spite of the failure of the lorry production facility, technology and investment were especially important to President Karimov's public credibility. Accordingly, in the beginning of 2000, Uzbekistan's leader appealed for more Western investment in the country, specifically in the field of technology: 'when we speak about the most modern technologies, they are in the most developed countries, like Japan, Germany, America and France (...) If we want to achieve this we must establish very close relations with the most developed countries, because, without attracting investments and foreign capital, I cannot see any prospect of developing our economy.'⁴⁰² Germany seems to have acted upon these calls. In effect, from the mid-1990s to 2010, Uzbekistan received approximately 265 million euros in development funds from Germany (more than Kazakhstan in the same period) (Bruck et al. 2011: 798).

After President Karimov's first visit to Germany, Chancellor Kohl declared support for Central Asian countries, particularly those who followed a 'Turkish model',⁴⁰³ i.e. focusing on secular development such as Uzbekistan. Then, in July, President Karimov received a delegation of economic experts from the *Bundestag* (the German Federal Parliament), whom he thanked for being one of his country's 'most

³⁹⁷ -President of Uzbekistan arrives in Germany on a visitøTASS, 27 April 1993.

³⁹⁸ -Gesentzentwurf der BundesregierungøDeutscher Bundestag, 12 May 1995, available at: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/13/076/1307614.pdf>, accessed August 2012.

³⁹⁹ See the report in -Mercedes plans to assemble lorries in UzbekistanøMonthly Report on EuropeNewsletter, 19 May 1994.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ -Automobile industry in UzbekistanøCentral Asia & Caucasus Business Report, 24 February 2004.

⁴⁰² -Uzbek president speaks to journalists in parliamentary session breakøBBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 24 January 2000.

⁴⁰³ -Kohl reiterates German commitment on cooperation in Central AsiaøAgence France Presse - English, 21 May 1993.

significant partners (...) that were making a concrete and significant contribution'.⁴⁰⁴ By that time, Alcatel and Siemens were already showing a strong interest in Uzbekistan's communications and electronics sectors.⁴⁰⁵ In fact, the increased interest in German businesses for the region was reflected in the creation of a German industries centre in Tashkent in December 1994.⁴⁰⁶

Berlin's support for Germany's business ventures in Central Asia persisted, as President Chaim Herzog made an official visit to Uzbekistan in April 1995. Having the head of state of Europe's most powerful economy travelling to Tashkent clearly reinforced President Karimov's *equality*, *prestige* and *technocratic roles* (it is important to bear in mind that President Karimov had not yet been received by the United States President – see Chapter V).

During the visit, President Herzog was accompanied by a group of approximately thirty businessmen, as is custom in many state visits. He further highlighted the need of increasing economic cooperation 'to meet the interests of the two countries and peoples.'⁴⁰⁷ Many of these promises did not just remain on paper and, as a result, the *Goethe Institute* (the leading German cultural and language centre) opened an office in Uzbekistan in 1998. Moreover, other German-sponsored organizations expanded to Central Asia, such as the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the German Adult Education Association (DVV), the German Development Service (DED), the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) (Krumm 2007: 10).

Soon after Mr Herzog's visit, it was President Karimov's turn to visit Germany in November 1995 (his second in two years). Germany's President was apparently aware of Mr Karimov's calls for *defending equality* and *Uzbekistan's great image*, and so took him on an exhibition entitled 'Uzbekistan-the Heritage of the Great Silk Road.' These occasions were ideal platforms for augmenting Mr Karimov's credibility, who talked with leading representatives of Germany's industrial sector.⁴⁰⁸

President Herzog also mentioned that Germany should invest more in Uzbekistan in order to decrease Central Asia's high level of migration.⁴⁰⁹ This seems, then, to have been an important priority for Chancellor Kohl's government, as immigration from the East intensified. Likewise, Germany's Foreign Minister, Klaus

⁴⁰⁴ -Central Asian Republicsø Uzbek president receives Bundestag delegation of economic expertsøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 27 July 1993.

⁴⁰⁵ -Alcatel-Alsthom east German Unit to install Uzbek telephone systemøAFX News, 5 May 1993.

⁴⁰⁶ -Other republics; German trade centre to be built in TashkentøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 23 December 1994.

⁴⁰⁷ -Germany interested in cooperation with UzbekistanøTASS, 4 April 1995.

⁴⁰⁸ -Uzbek President arrives in Germany on official visitøTASS, 14 November 1995.

⁴⁰⁹ -Germany to give aid to ethnic Germans in UzbekistanøTASS, 16 November 1995.

Kinkel, voiced a similar concern when visiting Uzbekistan just a few months later.⁴¹⁰ Other than business, economic development and migration, Tashkent was also receptive to developing stronger security ties with Germany. The two states thus agreed in October of 1995 to start a military training programme in German facilities.⁴¹¹ It is important to be aware that Germany's interest in the former Soviet Union was also reflected in the European Union's policy, allowing for President Karimov to bolster his role of *bridge to other markets*. Hence, he signed the EU's partnership cooperation agreement in June 1996.⁴¹²

The various public encounters evinced role compatibility, resulting in bilateral cooperation during most of Chancellor Kohl's tenure in office. Indeed, such was the level of convergence that Tashkent agreed to broadcast some of *Deutsche Welle's* radio and television programmes in May 1997.⁴¹³

Germany's new government: business as usual

In October 1998, Gerhard Schroeder, the chairman of Germany's Social Democrat Party (SPD), was elected Chancellor, thus putting an end to Mr Kohl's sixteen-year Christian Democratic Union (CDU) government. Mr Schroeder was forced to make a coalition with the Green Party, led by Joschka Fischer, who became Germany's Foreign Minister. However, the leftist credentials of the new government and, in particular, those of the Eco-friendly Green Party, did not lead to a shift in Germany's relationship with authoritarian Uzbekistan; quite the opposite, as Chancellor Schroeder appealed for Germany's assertiveness in the international public sphere and pushed for greater 'self-confidence' (Otte & Greve 2000: 198).

Lack of discontinuity meant that trade and President Karimov's *technocratic* roles were not put into question. A delegation led by Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister visited Germany in September 1999 and signed an Anti-Double Taxation accord.⁴¹⁴ The two sides also discussed further economic cooperation as well as the importance of security, namely fighting illegal drug trafficking and crime.⁴¹⁵ Up to the turn of the

⁴¹⁰ -German foreign minister to visit Uzbekistan, Kazakhstanø *Agence France Presse ó English*, 29 May 1996.

⁴¹¹ -Antwort des Bundesregierung: auf die Kleine Anfrageø *Deutscher Bundestag*, 6 June 2006, available via <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/16/017/1601759.pdf>, accessed August 2012.

⁴¹² -Signing of the partnership and cooperation agreement between the European communities and the Republic of Uzbekistanø *RAPID*, 21 June 1996.

⁴¹³ -Deutsche Welle TV to be broadcast in Tashkentø *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 23 May 1997.

⁴¹⁴ -Entwurf eines Gesetzesø *Deutsches Bundestag*, 29 May 2000, available at <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/14/034/1403465.pdf>, accessed August 2012.

⁴¹⁵ -Uzbekistan- Germany sign anti-double taxation accordø *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 15 September 1999.

century, President Karimov continued receiving important German delegations, such as the head of the *Bundestag* in May 2000.⁴¹⁶ Uzbekistan's leader responded positively to the growing level of interaction. For example, in a speech at the United Nations (UN), in September 2000, he appealed for Germany (as well as Japan) to become a member of the UN Security Council.⁴¹⁷

VI.2. The growing importance of security, 2001-2005

The beginning of the 21st century brought added complexity to the relationship. Unlike Tashkent's bilateral relations with Washington, focused on protecting *stability*, security matters were not a significant feature of Uzbekistani-German relations (in spite of the 1995 bilateral security agreement - see above). Still, the problematic situation in Afghanistan and its repercussions for the region became unavoidable, which eventually contributed to a growing security relationship.

Nevertheless, increased visibility in the public sphere meant that Germany would have to pay heed to its civilian roles. Hence, appeals for reform became somewhat more noticeable in the public sphere, although most rhetoric focused on praising Uzbekistan's *stability*.

The Beginnings of a Stronger Security Relationship

In April 2001, security became a visible issue-area during President Karimov's third visit to Germany. Uzbekistan's leader met with his German counterpart, with whom he discussed terrorism and international security.⁴¹⁸ Afterwards, two agreements were signed, aiming to improve transportation links and fighting against drug trafficking and organized crime.⁴¹⁹

Curiously, German officials were also less reluctant to discuss reform, perhaps due to the financial difficulties faced by some German businessmen in Uzbekistan. Chancellor Schroeder made reference to this problem and personally appealed for President Karimov to loosen the currency constraints - a controversial issue in that year, given that the IMF decided to not replace its representative in Uzbekistan after the end of his term. Nevertheless, *Financial Times Deutschland* reported that most of

⁴¹⁶ -President Karimov, foreign minister receive German Bundestag headøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 24 May 2000.

⁴¹⁷ -Uzbek president calls for reform of United NationsøBBC Worldwide Monitoring, 7 September 2000.

⁴¹⁸ -Uzbekistan, Germany sign agreements on cooperationøInterfax, 5 April 2001.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

these talks were private and so President Karimov's *technocratic expertise* was not heavily scrutinized in the public sphere.⁴²⁰

A month after President Karimov's visit, it was Foreign Minister Fischer's turn to visit Uzbekistan. As in the April meeting, security was the main subject-area.⁴²¹ This was thus congruent with President Karimov's role of *protector of stability*, which Berlin helped strengthen when it agreed to supply military hardware to Uzbekistan (Schoeller-Schletter 2005).

Other than security, though, Mr Fischer paid heed to Germany's civilian role and confronted Tashkent on the issue of democratic reform - a year after Madeleine Albright's controversial visit to Uzbekistan (see Chapter V). During a press conference, Mr Fischer stated that 'we discussed the questions of democratic reforms and an independent press and consider these are key questions in obtaining stability.'⁴²² Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister admitted that Uzbekistan 'had not obtained the level of freedom of press as developed by democratic countries', but cautioned journalists that Uzbekistan was moving forward. Mr Fisher then praised Uzbekistan for its *stability*: 'we have an interest in peace and stability in this region. For this reason I have come here on a visit because we think that should there be peace and stability, Uzbekistan will play a central role in the region.'⁴²³

Germany leaps to the Hindu Kush

A day after 11 September, NATO invoked article five of its founding treaty, and so the tragic incidents were considered an attack on all allies. Chancellor Schroeder took Germany's public commitment to NATO seriously. He and gave full backing to the United States and then, in November, decided to supply troops for peace-keeping in Afghanistan.⁴²⁴ Berlin's assertiveness and growing responsibilities in the international public sphere gradually became connected to Afghanistan. Germany's government

⁴²⁰ -Präsident Islam Karimow auf Deutschland-Besuchø *Financial Times Deutschland*, 5 April 2001.

⁴²¹ -Uzbek head, foreign minister meet German foreign minister, discuss securityø *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 23 May 2001.

⁴²² -German FM urges democratic reform in Uzbekistanø *Agence France Presse ó English*, 23 May 2001.

⁴²³ It is perhaps important to observe that, in spite of the problematic security situation enveloping the region and the difficulties of working inside Uzbekistan, some German companies continued to see promise in the most populous Central Asian state. In August 2001, Krupp Materials Handling GmbH began rehabilitating the Angren coal mine in Uzbekistan and then, in September, Siemens signed an IT agreement with Uzbekistan's government. For more on Mr Schroeder's comments, see -Uzbek head, foreign minister meet German foreign minister, discuss securityø *BBC Monitoring Central Asia*, 23 May 2001. On the business transactions, see -Uzbekistan modernisiert Kohleförderungø *Länder und Märkte*, 17 August 2001; and -Uzbekistan signs IT accord with Siemensø *BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union*, 3 September 2001.

⁴²⁴ -Germany offers troops for war; A step toward nation's widest military action since WWIIø *The Herald-Sun*, 7 November 2001.

committed itself to post-conflict resolution in the region, particularly after hosting the Bonn conference in December 2001 – an event that quickly became a hallmark in the transition phase of Afghan politics and even praised by President Karimov.⁴²⁵

Assisting Afghanistan was perfectly compatible with Germany's aspiring foreign policy, in that it allowed Berlin to augment both assertiveness and prestige without fully comprising its civilian roles.⁴²⁶ This was then reflected in Berlin's strong intra-role cohesion, as all parties in the *Bundestag* – the SPD, CDU, FDP and Green Party – with the exception of the smaller Left party (*Linkspartei*), voted for the *Bundeswehr's* (the Federal Defense force) participation within ISAF. For that reason, Uzbekistan became one of the main transit countries for the German defence army.

At the end of January 2002, Germany's Defence Minister, Rudolf Scharping, visited Uzbekistan to lease a military base in Termez. Unlike those with the United States, the meetings between German and Uzbekistani officials seem to have gone smoothly (see Chapter V); this was perhaps because Berlin's original design for Termez was always logistical, rather than offensive, thereby not contradicting President Karimov's *voice for a non-militaristic Central Asia*. A *Der Spiegel* article also argued that the German financial offer for Termez was quite generous.⁴²⁷ As such, President Karimov quickly announced that the airport was being used by German forces for humanitarian purposes.⁴²⁸

Uzbekistan's President was under the spotlight of the international public sphere and various German high-level officials applauded the country's *stability* and its role in post-war Afghanistan. Once more, unlike relations with the United States, Berlin did not comment on Uzbekistan's internal political issues.⁴²⁹ By acting through discretion, President Karimov's roles were not subject to credibility problems. *Equality* was maintained and *stability* reinforced. It is also curious to observe that Germany and NATO's courting of President Karimov led to disappointment in Kazakhstan. According to *Der Spiegel*, Astana rejected German military over-flights, perhaps because it did not see its regional prestige taken into account.⁴³⁰ Given the public importance given to protocol (see his statement about sitting next to President Clinton in Chapter IV), this controversy certainly boosted President Karimov's role of defender of *Uzbekistan's image*.

⁴²⁵ -Uzbek president hails Bonn documents on AfghanistanøTASS, 6 December 2001.

⁴²⁶ Not all those inside Germany were convinced of Chancellor Schröder's vision for Afghanistan. For instance, according to a November 2001 article in *Die Welt*, Afghanistan was a perfect opportunity for Germany's government to divert attention from some pressing domestic issues (Schwilk 2001).

⁴²⁷ -Lukratives Geschäftø*Der Spiegel*, 21 January 2002.

⁴²⁸ -Termez aerodrome in Uzbekistan to be used by German troopsø*RIA Novosti*, 27 January 2002.

⁴²⁹ Evidently, silence does not imply that there were no private discussions. However, in the public sphere, there were no signs hindering cooperation between the two states.

⁴³⁰ -Lukratives Geschäftøop. cit.

In February 2002, Mr Scharping met again with President Karimov in order to discuss the operational costs of Germany's new base.⁴³¹ At the time, President Karimov offered high praise to his German partners: 'we consider Germany our reliable partner. Or bilateral cooperation is based on a firm, long-term legal foundation (...) Germany is actively taking part in economic investment, providing modern technologies to large projects and thus promoting the country's economic development.' What is interesting about the latter statement is that it barely focused on security, which was by far the preponderant issue-area of the post-11 September public sphere. Instead, President Karimov publicly acknowledged the relationship's economic contributions and its *stability*. Mr Scharping also gave an equally strong panegyric by praising his own country's investment in the region (Zhukov 2002) and Uzbekistan's hospitality: 'my Uzbek counterpart Qodir Ghulomov [sic] and I visited many places of interest in Uzbekistan, and I acquainted myself with local traditions. I like Uzbek people's warm hospitality. As far as cooperation between the two countries is concerned, I am satisfied with its current state. I am sure that socioeconomic and military-technical relations between the two countries will further improve.'⁴³²

The new security dimension in the countries' relations had thus an auspicious beginning and President Karimov's *prestige* was on the rise, especially when Chancellor Schroeder travelled to the country in May 2002. It was the first visit by a German Chancellor and the two parties focused on specific military, security and economic issues. Notwithstanding the military dimension, Chancellor Schroeder did concede that such issues as 'civil society, the interdependence of state security on the one hand and an individual's rights on the other (...) [would be] continued in future.'⁴³³

Enhanced security cooperation was clearly at the forefront and the credibility of Germany's government in the international public sphere became gradually more connected to the situation in Afghanistan. In fact, in December 2002, Germany's newest Defence Minister, Peter Struck, made a controversial remark when he argued that the 'Federal Republic of Germany is also defended in the Hindu Kish.'⁴³⁴ The statement reflects how much Germany's defensive security policy had changed since the early 1990s, when, at the time, its armed forces were not authorized to participate in foreign military operations. Germany's new roles led it to supervising ISAF

⁴³¹ -Germany has signed an agreement with Uzbekistan to rent the airport in TermezøBBC *Summary of World Broadcasts*, 2 March 2002.

⁴³² -German defence minister says satisfied with Uzbek-German cooperationøBBC *Monitoring Central Asia Unit Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 13 February 2002.

⁴³³ See -Schroeder hails Uzbekistan's role in terrorism fightø*Agence France Presse ó English*, 10 May 2002 and -Schröder lobt usbekische Hilfe für Bundeswehrkontingent; Kanzler setzt sich in Taschkent für Pressefreiheit einø*Die Welt*, 11 May 2002.

⁴³⁴ -Pressekonferenz mit Minister Struck zur Weiterentwicklung der Bundeswehrø*Bundesministerium der Verteidigung*, 5 December 2002, available via <http://www.bmvg.de/>, accessed September 2012.

operations in February 2003. *Protecting stability* thus remained a public priority and, in 2003, Germany's government continued to praise Uzbekistan for its role in providing security to the region.⁴³⁵ The two parties thus converged on the problem of drug trafficking in Central Asia,⁴³⁶ and the Hizb ut-Tahrir. The latter was frequently posed as a threat by President Karimov, who then lauded Berlin for barring the organization from public activity in 2003⁴³⁷ (just a few months before President Karimov blamed it for orchestrating the attacks against the American and Israeli embassies).⁴³⁸

It is also important to note that, besides *protecting stability*, other roles were pushed to the spotlight, even if less ostentatiously. Tashkent continued receiving German investors, such as in July 2002.⁴³⁹ Moreover, Mr Karimov did make some visible, even if minor, concessions on political reform. In October 2002, German and Uzbekistani journalists met in Bukhara to discuss media freedom;⁴⁴⁰ and later, in August 2003, Tashkent allowed a foreign journalists association, led by a *Deutsche Welle* correspondent, to be registered.⁴⁴¹

Therefore, unlike the bilateral relationship with the United States, President Karimov seems to have had a reliable and *stable* partner. Furthermore, the relations extended beyond security, thereby reinforcing almost all of Mr Karimov's role group-types, namely *technocracy*, *prestige* and even its *cultural authenticity* (see Chapter III for more on role group-types). This level of role compatibility fostered strong cooperation, which became clearly observable in the year the United States Congress blocked aid to Uzbekistan. At the time, Chancellor Schroeder's showed unswerving support for Tashkent: 'Islom Karimov is a leading politician who proved the drug trade was a source of income for international terrorism. We'll continue to support

⁴³⁵ -Schroeder thanks Uzbekistan for assistance in peacekeeping in Afghanistanø *Interfax*, 13 August 2003.

⁴³⁶ -Afghanistan, six neighbouring states sign antidrug agreement in Germanyø *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 1 April 2004.

⁴³⁷ -Uzbek president's news conference on 26 August- full textø *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 27 August 2004.

⁴³⁸ For President Karimov's condemnation of the Hizb-ut Tahrir, see -Uzbek president blames blasts on Hizb ut-Tahrir followersø *Agence France Presse*ø *English*, 31 July 2004.

⁴³⁹ -Uzbekistan and Germany discuss development of economic cooperationø *RIA Novosti*, 6 July 2002.

⁴⁴⁰ -Uzbek and German journalists discuss media freedomø *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 25 October 2002.

⁴⁴¹ See references to the journalist association in -Uzbekistan registers foreign journalists' associationø *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 16 August 2003. However, it is important to be aware that restrictions on the press still remained severe. See, for instance, a reference to these problems in: -Deutsche Welle office robbed after blunt query to Uzbek leader - web siteø *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 24 December 24 2003.

Uzbekistan's policies in the future, and will do everything we can to strengthen cooperation.'⁴⁴²

VI.3. Testing the Partnership: The 2005 Andijan Crisis

By the end of 2003, President Karimov had gradually shifted his rhetoric from *technocracy* toward increased *authenticity* (see Chapters III and V), which could have potentially contributed toward role conflict with Germany. However, after the Andijan crisis in May 2005, discontinuity meant that Berlin's roles conflicted, seeing as Chancellor Schroeder had to clarify how he would deal with his Central Asian partner. In the end, Berlin would continue to cooperate with President Karimov, even after its late 2005 elections. The growing importance of Afghanistan in its foreign and defence roles (Germany would soon be responsible for peacekeeping in Afghanistan's north), as well as the fact that there was no substantial level of intra-role conflict in the *Bundestag* (unlike with the United States), meant that the relationship was not under intense public scrutiny.

Some German misgivings after the Andijan Crisis

Before May 2005, President Karimov's public relationship with Germany's government remained business as usual. Just a few months before the crisis, the Chairman of the State Customs Committee of Uzbekistan visited Germany. Further cooperation was discussed and a German official mentioned that 'our cooperation in countering terrorism is acquiring special significance. Uzbekistan is an important partner of ours in Central Asia. I recall with great pleasure my meeting with Uzbek President Islom Karimov, a man of energy and stamina.'⁴⁴³ Later, in April, Germany's Defence Minister visited Uzbekistan, where he made preparations for enhancing the security relationship.⁴⁴⁴

The massacre in the Ferghana city of Andijan brought about some friction, as President Karimov faced increased public criticism from the West. Indeed, many deputies in the *Bundestag* voiced their disapproval of the relationship. On May 17, the foreign policy spokesman of Germany's Green Party publicly condemned the violence in Andijan, thereby pressuring his party colleague, Foreign Minister Fischer, to take a

⁴⁴² -Germany's Schroeder hails Uzbek antiterror roleø*BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 11 October 2004.

⁴⁴³ -Uzbek customs head visits Germany to boost tiesø*BBC Monitoring Central Asia*, 18 February 2005.

⁴⁴⁴ -Uzbek, German defence ministers in talks to boost cooperationø*BBC Monitoring Central Asia*, 27 April 2005.

strong stance.⁴⁴⁵ Furthermore, *Deutsche Welle* reports covered the consequences of human suffering, to which President Karimov had already replied that ‘I have no complaints to German media outlets. I may disagree with their reports and statements, but I don't have complaints to them.’⁴⁴⁶ As pressure increased, Foreign Minister Fischer waited for feedback from his ambassador, who was at the time visiting Andijan (Weiland 2005). The trip apparently did not clarify the scale of events and so Mr Fischer called for an inquiry: ‘in order to reach a peaceful solution to this tense situation, it is essential that there is a prompt, independent and transparent investigation of the reports of a high death toll in Andijon and the circumstances of the degeneration into violence.’⁴⁴⁷

Ambiguity and potential role conflict in Germany's government subsided and Berlin did not pronounce itself about the events. However, some of the *Bundestag*'s deputies voiced their concern over German involvement, which was compounded by occasional media reports detailing the level of military and financial cooperation between Tashkent and Berlin (Schoeller-Schletter 2005). Uzbekistan was becoming a controversial part of the public's knowledge, although the two main German parties (SPD and CDU) did not contest Berlin's role in Afghanistan and its connection to Tashkent (Ibid).

Discretion in acting was Berlin's approach to the discontinuity, as Washington increased its level of criticism. The silence, however, was noticed by former British Ambassador Craig Murray (Murray 2005), who would in the following years become one of the strongest critics of Germany's relationship with Uzbekistan. Still, in August 2005, a spokesman of the German Ministry of Defence argued that the relationship was too valuable and that Americans being expelled was not a reason for its troops to leave the country.⁴⁴⁸

The political situation, though, was problematic and President Karimov reinforced his role of *undisputed authority* by coming down hard on foreign NGOs and the media (see Chapter V). Moreover, President Karimov escalated his rhetoric on differentiation by accusing the foreign media, including *Deutsche Welle*, of intervening

⁴⁴⁵ -Kuhn fordert internationale Untersuchungø*Der Spiegel*, 17 May 2005, available at <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/aufstand-in-usbekistan-kuhn-fordert-internationale-untersuchung-a-356299.html>, accessed 19 September 2012.

⁴⁴⁶ -Uzbek president says Andijon media coverage lacked factsø*BBC Monitoring World Media*, 18 May 2005.

⁴⁴⁷ -German FM calls for investigation into Uzbek violenceø*Agence France Presse ó English*, 19 May 2005.

⁴⁴⁸ -Bundeswehr bleibt auch nach Abzug der USAø*Der Spiegel*, 8 August 2005, available at <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/usbekistan-bundeswehr-bleibt-auch-nach-abzug-der-usa-a-367795.html>, accessed September 2012.

in the country.⁴⁴⁹ Curiously, President Karimov also hinted at some German responsibility for the Andijan crisis when he stated, in October, that many of the assailants were carrying both American and German weapons (Mirovalev 2005). Still, the crisis, juxtaposed to President Karimov's strong reactions, did not result in an immediate German reaction. Instead, it was the EU as a whole, led by the United Kingdom, that took a stance. The European Union's roles were clearly being put into question by the situation in Uzbekistan, and so Brussels reciprocated in October⁴⁵⁰ by placing an arms embargo and restricting travelling access to some of Tashkent's officials.

President Karimov's role of defender of *Uzbekistan's image* was, therefore, being seriously contested. Berlin, however, took the controversial step of allowing former Uzbekistani Interior Minister to travel to Germany, in spite of EU sanctions. The decision was justified on the basis of the Minister's health problems,⁴⁵¹ which eventually sparked intra-role conflict. A number of German parliamentarians in the opposition voiced their disapproval and called for a criminal investigation into Mr Almatov's involvement in Andijan. However, in March 2006, the Attorney General clarified that no such investigation would take place.⁴⁵² Furthermore, the government in Berlin continued acting in a 'business as usual' manner, thereby strengthening President Karimov's *technocratic* roles. As the future of the Termez base was being discussed, an advisor to Daimler-Chrysler and Chairman of the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations visited Uzbekistan and received a warm welcome from Mr Karimov.⁴⁵³ By late November, after prolonged private negotiations, Tashkent decided that it would allow Berlin to continue using the Termez airbase.

The decision conformed to Berlin's new defence and foreign policy roles (Zepelin & Kreimeier 2005). As for President Karimov, allowing the *Bundeswehr* to stay was congruent with *protecting stability* and his roles of *developer* and *bridge to other markets*. Given Berlin's financial commitments and the respect shown to Tashkent, there was still sufficient role compatibility. Berlin showed through its discretion that it did was not undermining President Karimov's *undisputed authority*.

⁴⁴⁹ -Uzbek prosecutor accuses foreign media of continuing öinformation waröBBC *Monitoring Central Asia*, 15 September 2005.

⁴⁵⁰ -Menschenrechtler begrüßen EU-Sanktionenö*Der Spiegel*, 4 October 2005, available at: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/usbekistan-menschenrechtler-begruessen-eu-sanktionen-a-378030.html>, accessed September 2012.

⁴⁵¹ -BANNED UZBEK MINISTER GETS GERMAN VISA WITH RUSSIAN, CHINESE HELPO*Ferghana.ru news agency*, 17 November 2005.

⁴⁵² -Kleine Anfrageö*Deutscher Bundestag*, 18 May 2005, available at <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/16/015/1601579.pdf>, accessed August 2012.

⁴⁵³ -Uzbek leader receives head of German business committeeö*UzReport.com*, 22 November 2005.

Increasing intra-role conflict in Germany

By the end of November, Germany's new Chancellor, Angela Merkel, had taken office. As a new cabinet was formed, the Parliamentary State Secretary personally visited Uzbekistan in December and thanked President Karimov for allowing the *Bundeswehr* to remain in Termez.

Not all in the *Bundestag* were pleased with the outcome. Some deputies argued that Human Rights were explicitly not for sale.⁴⁵⁴ Intra-role conflict, though, was not widespread and was mainly instigated by Germany's smaller parties, namely the FDP, the Left and Green Parties. Indeed, after the 2005 elections, the SPD and CDU now formed a grand coalition and both remained in favour of augmenting Berlin's more assertive roles in the international public sphere.

President Karimov, however, remained a challenge as he continued propounding *authenticity*-based roles, focused on differentiation (see Chapter IV), and increased the level of restrictions on foreign journalists, including on a *Deutsche Welle* correspondent.⁴⁵⁵ Such actions, whilst increasing the cohesiveness of Mr Karimov's less *technocratic* stance, brought credibility problems for Berlin as its relationship came into the public spotlight.

News from German reports throughout the period also characterized the violent nature of President Karimov's regime, using loaded expressions such as 'drinker of blood from Tashkent' (Neef 2006).⁴⁵⁶ Accordingly, members of parliament pressured Germany's Foreign and Defence ministries to reveal more information concerning their relationship with Tashkent,⁴⁵⁷ to which the government responded in June.⁴⁵⁸ Also, a parliamentary group visited the country in October 2006 and concluded that the human rights situation in Uzbekistan was still not optimistic (Bensmann 2006).

⁴⁵⁴ -Antrag: Menschenrechte in Usbekistan einfordernø*Deutscher Bundestag*, 14 December 2005, available at :<http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/16/002/1600225.pdf>, accessed September 2012.

⁴⁵⁵ -Sendeverbot in Usbekistanø*Der Spiegel*, 17 March 2006, available at: <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/gesellschaft/deutsche-welle-sendeverbot-in-usbekistan-a-406567.html>, accessed September 2012.

⁴⁵⁶ Besides Neef (2006) see, for instance, the following article in *Der Spiegel*: -Sharp diplomatic note to Germansø*Der Spiegel*, 29 January 2006.

⁴⁵⁷ -Antwort Auf die Kleine Anfrage derø*Deutscher Bundestag*, 3 April 2006, available at: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/16/011/1601117.pdf>, accessed September 2012.

-Antrag: Menschenrechte in Usbekistan einfordernø*Deutscher Bundestag*, 28 June 2006, available at: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/16/019/1601975.pdf>, accessed September 2012.

⁴⁵⁸ The report detailed that, between 2002 and 2005, the Termez air base was used on average for over 300 annual flights. Moreover, the same report clarified that, since 2002, sixty-three Uzbekistani military officers had been trained in Germany and that Berlin was requested to do considerable infrastructure development around Termez to have its basing rights extended. See the full report in -Antwort des Bundesregierung:ø*Deutscher Bundestag*, 6 June 2006, available at <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/16/017/1601759.pdf>, accessed September 2012.

Meanwhile, role conflict also took place within the EU, prompted in part by former British Ambassador Craig Murray's testimony to the European Parliament. He made grave accusations, alleging that Germany's intelligence services had obtained information from Uzbekistan gathered by use of torture (Büchner 2006). The European Parliament demanded a clarification, to which the German government responded with a closed door committee at the *Bundestag* - a decision that did not please some of Germany's own deputies.⁴⁵⁹

While intra-role conflict grew, the height of contestation was not yet significant, given that the two largest parties, the CDU and SPD, remained committed to peacekeeping and also supported stable economic connections with the Central Asian Republics. Accordingly, in May 2006, the advisor to Daimler-Chrysler visited Uzbekistan again, followed in July by Defence Minister Franz Josef Jung (Muscta 2007). Indeed, in September 2006, Uzbekistan's President saw his *prestige* augmented as his new book was published in Bremen; and, when outgoing Ambassador Hans-Joachim Kiderlen recognized Karimov's personal *expertise*: 'after the delivery presentation of credentials, he [President Karimov] struck me by his precise and profound knowledge about the situation in the FRG [Federal Republic of Germany], his vision of prospects for bilateral relations.'

Perhaps the most relevant event for the bilateral relationship was the visit of Germany's Foreign Minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, in November, who confessed a desire to pressure for removing EU sanctions.⁴⁶⁰ This position evidently boosted President Karimov's *undisputed* leadership, even more so because Germany was about to become the acting President of EU. Mr Karimov noted that Berlin was important for Uzbekistan and that 'here the experience and prestige of Uzbekistan are essential.'⁴⁶¹ For his part, Mr Steinmeier replied that he would take into consideration Tashkent's decision to give the Red Cross access to political prisoners and his hope that the EU and Uzbekistan would develop a stronger relationship in upcoming years.⁴⁶² Curiously, after the Foreign Minister's visit, Tashkent released an independent journalist from imprisonment.⁴⁶³ In spite of Berlin's public wish to soften EU sanctions, they were still renewed in November. Still, the Minister of State, Gernot Erler, argued that more than oil and gas was at stake in Central Asia, and that it was necessary for the EU to push for

⁴⁵⁹ 'Berlin will nur vertraulich informieren; Stellungnahme zur 'Uzbekistan-Connection' vor dem Parlamentarischen Kontrollgremium angekündigt' *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 22 April 2006.

⁴⁶⁰ 'Uzbekistan surprised by EU move to extend sanction' *Eurasianet.org*, 13 November 2006, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav111406.shtml>, accessed September 2012.

⁴⁶¹ 'Uzbek leader optimistic about ties with Germany' *BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, November 1 2006.

⁴⁶² 'Steinmeier: Chance für Neuaufnahme der Kooperation mit Usbekistan' *Agence France Presse ó German*, 1 November 2006.

⁴⁶³ 'Uzbekistan releases independent journalist' *Agence France Presse ó English*, 8 November 2006.

equality with countries in the region - a hint that was perhaps directed at President Karimov.⁴⁶⁴

VI.4. An increasingly frail relationship 2007-2010

A December 2008 article in the renowned German newspaper *Die Zeit* coined Foreign Minister Steinmeier's policy in Central Asia as 'Change through Rapprochement' (Wandel durch Annäherung) (Bittner et al. 2008). Comparing it purposefully with Willy Brandt's famous *Ostpolitik*, meant that Berlin was both seeking to engage with the East and calling for change. It, therefore, balanced its typical civilian roles with a new, more assertive, stance. This approach though was not entirely compatible with President Karimov's roles, since, at its core, it envisaged change, which could potentially affect *stability*. Still, it also meant that Mr Karimov's *undisputed authority* and public concerns over *defending equality* and *genuine independence* were not explicitly targeted.

Slogans aside, the policy, far from instigating serious discontinuity, was rather an extension of Germany's already typical approach to Central Asia. Perhaps the only alteration was that now there was a publicly recognized strategy, which effectively meant increased visibility for the region, particularly as Mr Steinmeier lobbied for a new EU strategy in 2007. This momentum was, in part, the result of Chancellor Merkel's increasing scepticism toward Moscow – an outlook that had already been duly noted by Russian press (Tsuvernik & Strokan 2006). The doubts eventually became more prominent after the 2006 gas conflict between Russia and Ukraine which, in turn, prompted the EU to enhance its energy cooperation with Central Asia (Hoffman 2010: 87; Kempe 2007; Krumm 2007; Hall 2007).

Foreign Minister Steinmeier's new EU strategy

In January 2007, as Germany assumed EU leadership, Mr Steinmeier introduced the concepts of his new EU strategy for Central Asia, arguing that 'we should simply check to see if we can help with stability in that region (...). It's a kind of gap in our European consciousness. As far as our common European past is concerned I can't see any stage where people were strongly interested in this region' (Rettman 2007b). Since *stability* was at the forefront, role compatibility with Uzbekistan was galvanized. The EU's new concept, therefore, concerned itself less with Human Rights than with the strategic importance of Central Asia (Rettman 2007a).

⁴⁶⁴ -Es geht um Abwehr von Gefahren- *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 27 December 2006.

Uzbekistani Foreign Minister, Vladimir Norov, showed some public willingness to accede to the strategy by clarifying that Uzbekistan did not need to justify itself for a stronger relationship with the EU⁴⁶⁵ and, by July 2007, the New Partnership was adopted by the European Council. Still, what seems to have been a quick process was actually a complicated endeavour.

President Karimov's unwillingness to compromise

It is important to be aware that Tashkent, as one of the targets of the EU's upcoming strategy, was still facing sanctions. The embargo and travelling restrictions were serious blows to President Karimov's public credibility as a *defender of Uzbekistan's image and equality*. Consequently, for cooperation to augment, inter-role conflict with EU would have to be mitigated. Berlin, too, would also have to grapple with its own increasing intra-role conflict regarding Uzbekistan.

Berlin demonstrated goodwill as it allowed Uzbekistani authorities to travel to Germany, despite the EU's sanctions.⁴⁶⁶ Thereafter, a German parliamentary delegation went to Tashkent to discuss reform.⁴⁶⁷ Controversy, though, soon became evident as negotiations advanced. Uzbekistan's Prosecution Office opened a case against a *Deutsche Welle* reporter, who was accused of tax evasion.⁴⁶⁸ The timing of the case is suspicious given that it coincided with Mr Norov's trip to Astana, where he would discuss the EU's new strategy. According to a variety of press reports, Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister disagreed with the way negotiations were going and how *international equality* was being put into question, stating that 'we will justify [ourselves] to nobody' and condemning the 'student-teacher relationship' that the EU was apparently seeking to implement.⁴⁶⁹

The situation reached a temporary stalemate, but Tashkent then dropped its accusations against the *Deutsche Welle* correspondent,⁴⁷⁰ and the EU removed the travelling sanctions in October (Ibid). Whether these events are connected is still open to discussion, yet they evince the quagmire over conflicting roles, namely Tashkent's

⁴⁶⁵ -Germany says EU must create new energy ties with Central Asiaø *AFX International Focus*, 28 March 2007.

⁴⁶⁶ -Usbekische Gäste besuchen Berlin; Regierungsdelegation will jetzt über Strafrechtsreformen sprechen. Zu Hause sitzen Menschenrechtler hinter Gittern tazø *die tageszeitung*, 15 January 2007.

⁴⁶⁷ -Presidential initiatives presented in Germanyø *UzReport.com*, 24 January 2007.

⁴⁶⁸ -Deutsche Welle's Uzbek journalist accused of tax evasionø *BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 25 March 2007.

⁴⁶⁹ For more on Mr Norov's declarations, see the following article: -Uzbekistan weist EU zurecht; Missklänge über Menschenrechtsfragen bei Konferenz in Astanaø *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 20 March 2007. According to EU negotiators, Tashkent then played delaying tactics by postponing successive meetings, in an apparent ploy to avoid the presence of Human Rights lobbies (Hoffman 2010: 99).

⁴⁷⁰ -Uzbeks drop case against Deutsche Welle reportersø *Agence France Presse ó English*, 11 June 2007.

prestige and *equality* versus Berlin and the EU's civilian responsibilities of pushing for political reform. Removing the sanctions solved part of the problem, but simultaneously increased Germany's intra-role conflict, given that its Foreign Minister was now considered to be disinterested in Human Rights issues.⁴⁷¹

Security once more: the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)

After the EU's initial concessions, a number of events in Germany would spark greater intra-role conflict. On September 2007, an attack planned by alleged members of the so-called *Sauerland cell* of Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), was foiled by a joint CIA-German operation. Three people were apprehended - two of German and one of Turkish nationality (Whitlock 2007) – all of whom orchestrated an attack on American military facilities in Germany. Thereafter, the *Bundestag* demanded a better explanation as to the nature of the terrorist group and some parliamentarians even questioned whether the IJU actually existed.⁴⁷²

Then, another equally damaging incident took place in March 2008 when an American military base in Afghanistan was attacked by a terrorist of German citizenship (Gebauer & Musharbash 2008), followed then by another incident provoked by a German radical, Erich Breininger, who condemned Berlin's actions in Afghanistan.⁴⁷³ These events were indirectly connected to Uzbekistan, even more so when, at the time, its head of intelligence, Rustam Inoyatov, visited Germany for reasons that remain unknown, thus sparking debate as to the nature of the private cooperation between the two states.⁴⁷⁴ So, intra-role conflict increased in Germany as it discussed whether it should retreat from its new, more assertive, roles in the region.

While reform in Central Asia was discussed in parliament, mixed cues were also conveyed when Uzbekistani Defence officials continued meeting with their German

⁴⁷¹ Such issues became more prominent, especially when Mr Steinmeier refused to receive the Dalai Lama who, in contrast, was granted a meeting by Chancellor Merkel in 2008. See the following news reports discussing the Human Rights policy of the grand coalition: 'Problematisch diplomatisch' *Financial Times Deutschland*, 12 December 2007; and 'Steinmeier's bad example' *The New York Times*, 14 May 2008, available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/14/opinion/14iht-edgermany.1.12879647.html>, accessed September 2012.

⁴⁷² For the doubts about the IJU, see the following transcript from the *Bundestag*: 'Islamische Dschihad Union' *Bundestag*, 10 January 2008, available at: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/16/077/1607722.pdf>, accessed September 2012. It is important to be aware that some research later revealed that the IJU was formed in 2002 and was a more radical offshoot of the IMU (e.g. Logvinov 2010: 76), with perhaps stronger connections to Al Qaida (Kaiser et al. 2008).

⁴⁷³ 'Uzbekistan: Germany Apparently Seeks Tashkent's Help to Combat Islamic Terrorist Cell' *Eurasianet.org*, 28 October 2008, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav102908.shtml>, accessed August 2012.

⁴⁷⁴ 'Germany criticized for holding talks with Uzbek secret service chief' *Die Welt*, 31 October 2008.

counterparts throughout 2008.⁴⁷⁵ Foreign Minister Steinmeier could not completely avoid Uzbekistan and his own assertive EU strategy, which was then reflected in the speech he gave to the *Bundestag*, commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He argued that his prudent, yet controversial, policy had actually been successful in advancing with reform in Uzbekistan: 'let me turn to Uzbekistan (...) Of course, there is still so much to do there in the sphere of human rights. But some positive steps have been taken. I called personally for the abolition of the death penalty in Uzbekistan (...) We have created benchmarks. For example, we successfully campaigned for the ICRC to be at long last allowed access to Uzbek prisons again. I ask for greater understanding for the EU's policy on Central Asia.'⁴⁷⁶

Growing controversy concerning Germany's Involvement in Uzbekistan

While the nature of Berlin's long-term relationship with Tashkent became more visible, Germany's intra-role conflict propagated to Uzbekistan, as President Karimov had to pay heed to public criticism. Growing inter-role conflict, though, only appeared gradually, as economic roles were still relevant. These were, therefore, wholly congruent with Mr Karimov's *technocratic* roles since access to loans remained open,⁴⁷⁷ in addition to the increase in German investment.⁴⁷⁸

By 2009, Chancellor Angela Merkel was re-elected and the grand coalition between the CDU and SPD ceased to be. The CDU then formed a new coalition with the smaller FDP, making Guido Westerwelle Germany's new foreign minister. The government would thus face some increased criticism, especially when a news report conveyed that Germany's government had cooperated with Uzbekistan's military during the period of EU sanctions.⁴⁷⁹

Such reports only reinforced the negative spotlight as well as Germany's apparent disregard for Human Rights and civilian roles. Another report in May of 2010 remonstrated against a decision taken by the Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) - a CDU-affiliated foundation - to celebrate Germany's cooperation with Uzbekistan on 13 May (the anniversary of the Andijan crisis) without making a single reference to the

⁴⁷⁵ -Uzbek, German defence officials discuss cooperationøBBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 2 September 2008.

⁴⁷⁶ -Speech by foreign minister Frank-Walter SteinmeierøStates News Service, 5 December 2008.

⁴⁷⁷ -Uzbek agricultural construction bank draws Commerzbank's loanøTrend Daily Economic News, 9 December 2009.

⁴⁷⁸ German businesses made a number of investments on automobile production, as well as fertilizer plants in Uzbekistan at the time. See, for example, the following reports: -Daimler Buses receives contract from UzbekistanøAuto Business News, 6 July 2009; -German, Uzbek joint venture producing tractorsøThe Times of Central Asia, 16 April 2010; -Uzbek fertilizer producers aim at foreign marketsøUzReport.com, 24 May 2010.

⁴⁷⁹ -Deutschland schulte usbekische Soldateøddp Basisdienst, 24 March 2010.

tragic events of 2005.⁴⁸⁰ Still, none of these brought about significant intra-role conflict. The SPD was now in the opposition, but the new coalition persisted with *protecting stability*. Therefore, when President Karimov met with Mr Westerwelle in July 2010, both focused on defence, an issue that was considered very relevant after conflict erupted in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan. Uzbekistan's President highlighted the importance of bilateral relations but paid heed to Germany's intra-role conflict by conceding to the need of pursuing reform: '[German-Uzbekistani relations] concerns both political and democratic reforms, as well as economic and humanitarian spheres. I would like to say that Uzbekistan puts certain trust in German institutions concerning cooperation to resolve such important issues as progress of society's democratization and economic liberalization and so on.'⁴⁸¹

In spite of the business as usual attitude, it became increasingly evident that President Karimov would have to face Berlin's increased suspicion, especially after Zeromax - a large, Swiss-based conglomerate with business links to Uzbekistan - declared bankruptcy in November 2010. According to an advisor to Germany's Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, this meant that Uzbekistan was 130 million euros in debt to German businesses.⁴⁸² Once more, the relationship was visible for the worst possible reasons and Germany's Federal Commissioner on Human Rights publicly criticized Uzbekistan for using Child Labour in cotton fields.⁴⁸³

Epilogue

The end of 2010 finished with uncertainty and relations becoming increasingly tense. Indeed, President Karimov's visit to Brussels in January 2011 did not result in any visible economic concessions that could bolster Tashkent's *technocratic* roles. Instead, it was heavily criticized by the press, affecting Mr Karimov's role of defender of *Uzbekistan's great image*. The German press chastised Uzbekistan's leader, and the renowned newspaper *Die Zeit* mockingly labelled him as '*Unser Diktator*' (Our dictator) (Bota 2011). Consequently, by 2010, President Karimov's uncompromising roles were under greater scrutiny, as both Berlin and Tashkent had to reconcile disparaging positions concerning *stability*, *civilizing* roles and commercial contacts. What seems clear is that Berlin was conflicted between its usual discrete assertion and its other responsibilities. Unlike Washington, though, Berlin never evinced strong

⁴⁸⁰ -Deutscher Schmuskurs mit Karimowø*die tageszeitung*, 12 May 2012.

⁴⁸¹ -Uzbek president upbeat on cooperation with Germanyø*BBC Monitoring Central Asia*, 15 July 2010.

⁴⁸² -Uzbekistan owes Germany 130M EURO after Zeromax Building Spreeø*The Times of Central Asia*, 5 November 2010.

⁴⁸³ -German Rights Official criticizes Tashkents reliance on child laborø*The Times of Central Asia*, 12 November 2010.

intra-role conflict within its own cabinet, since contestation originated mainly from the *Bundestag*'s smaller opposition parties (two of which were the FDP and the Green Party). Moreover, Germany also assumed a stronger economic role than the United States, which meant that, despite incompatibility between reform and *stability*, it still managed to converge with President Karimov's more *technocratic* roles.

VII. The Uzbekistani-Turkish Relationship 1991-2010

Uzbekistan and its Central Asian neighbours were not the only ones entering an unprecedented era after the end of the Cold War. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the gradual dissolution of Yugoslavia, Turkey's governments faced new challenges (Aydin 2004: 1; Kut 2001: 5; Fuller 1993: 37). This shift in geopolitics, along with several internal transformations, convinced Barry Rubin (2001: 1) that Ankara had changed 'its foreign policy and self-image more than any other post-communist country in the post-Cold War era.'

As both Turkey and Uzbekistan opened themselves to the international public sphere, everything would suggest the beginning of a fruitful and cooperative relationship. Besides a similar language, common culture and ancestry, Ankara's Kemalist roles focused on secularism and Turkish nationalism, all of which was potentially congruent with President Karimov's *technocratic* roles.⁴⁸⁴ Indeed, the resemblance seemed so straightforward that, in 1994, NATO delegated Turkey the task of promoting the alliance's aims in Central Asia (Winrow 2001: 216).

However, Turkish-Uzbekistani relations were actually beset by continuous inter-role conflict. After the 1980 coup, Turkey progressively liberalized its political environment (Zurcher 2004: 289-292), which inevitably led to growing debate over the foundations of its foreign policy. According to Mucahit Bilici (2006: 3), the root ideologies of modern Turkish politics originated in the *Tanzimat* period (a time of reform in the 19th century Ottoman Empire) and are all more or less classified under secularism, Islamism and Ottomanism. The first led Turkey to engage with the West, the second toward the Middle East, whereas the latter results from a growing fascination for the history of its former empire, the Caucasus and Central Asia (Fuller 1993: 47). Consequently, Ottomanism may occasionally evince some pan-Turkic elements. Those very general roles frequently overlap, however, as was exemplified by the rise of the AKP (see below). Moreover, the fluctuating reinterpretations were far from being consensual within domestic politics, as many Turkish citizens did not agree, for example, with President Turgut Özal's optimistic engagement with Central Asia (Ibid: 73).

Naturally, Ankara's contacts and curiosity fostered some role compatibility with Tashkent. For one, Turkey's government quickly recognized President Karimov's regime, which bolstered Uzbekistan's *international image*. Ankara's Ottomanist role also envisaged a number of economic projects linking East to West that very much

⁴⁸⁴ In addition to converging strategic conceptions, economic contacts between the two states grew and, by 2010, Turkey was Uzbekistan's third largest export market.

converged with President Karimov's role of *bridging markets*. Yet, behind these manifestations was a strong level of inter-role conflict, which many times suggested that Ankara desired leadership, thereby contradicting President Karimov's role of *defending international equality*.

Moreover, Ankara faced a strong level of intra-role conflict after the mid-1990s which, compounded by the fact that it was not as economically powerful as Berlin and Washington, contributed to bilateral role conflict. In other words, domestic controversies in Ankara collided with President Karimov's appeals for *protecting stability* and *de-ideologized transition*. Moreover, lack of economic influence was hardly compatible with his other technocratic roles, namely *developing Uzbekistan*, seeing as Turkey could not guarantee the level of investment it promised (Winrow 2001: 204; Fuller 1993).

Distrust also became increasingly observable in the public sphere, which was made clear by Tashkent's growing repression of the Fetullah Gülen movement (Krespin-Sharon 2009; Park 2007). Conspiracies over the Gülen movement led to inter-role conflict, which also reverberated into Turkey's own domestic politics. In fact, to this day, the aims of the Fetullah Gülen movement are far from consensual in Turkish politics, especially after the more traditional Welfare and Justice and Development parties rose to power.

In addition to incompatibilities over economic development and the rise of political Islam, Turkey's Western orientation could not match the public demands of President Karimov. Ankara had to balance its credibility in the public sphere, as Tashkent appealed for Ankara to fully reinforce President Karimov's *undisputed authority*. Ankara many times hesitated, seeing as it did not want to affect its important relationships with the European Union and Washington.

VII.1. A Promising Start: 1991-1993

After 1991, everything would suggest that Turkey and Uzbekistan would both become major partners, particularly because the Turkish President, Turgut Özal, was publicly committed to reaching out to Central Asia, even during Moscow's rule. Before the wave of independence in 1991, he received Azerbaijan's President in 1990 and also, in early 1991, made a stopover in both Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan whilst visiting the Soviet Union (Aydin 2004: 2-3). This interest for the region probably explains why, by October, Azerbaijan's Prime Minister stated that if Ankara did not recognize his state, no other country would (Kovaci 1991).

Similarly, with President Karimov's declaration of independence, followed in December by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Turkish support boosted the

international *equality* and *prestige* of President Karimov. Accordingly, he soon travelled to Turkey at the bequest of his counterpart, where he obtained full recognition. Henceforth, the bilateral contacts multiplied, but subtle rhetorical nuances conveyed that roles were actually far from being compatible.

President Karimov visits Turkey

On 17 December 1991, President Karimov travelled to Turkey.⁴⁸⁵ At the time, President Özal requested President Karimov to ‘relay our [Turkey’s] warmest wishes to the brotherly Uzbek people. We will always be together with our Uzbek brothers (...) [I] am sure the people of Turkey and Uzbekistan as well as the people of Turkestan as a whole will become respected members of the world community by the year 2000’ (Litvinenko 1991). Turkey’s President, whose Motherland Party (Anavatan partisi, ANAP) had come in second in the November parliamentary elections, was inevitably staking much of his public credibility on Central Asia.

After becoming acquainted with the Turkish capital, President Karimov visited President Özal’s official residence and signed a variety of comprehensive agreements on culture, education and economic cooperation, of which the most important was a protocol proposing diplomatic recognition.⁴⁸⁶ Curiously, President Karimov iterated that Uzbekistan was a sovereign and independent state ‘that determines its own domestic and foreign policies’;⁴⁸⁷ meaning that only after publicly demarcating his country’s *genuine independence* and *equality*, did he proceed to sign the documents.⁴⁸⁸ President Karimov then praised Turkey’s approach in the international public sphere: ‘in light of the current difficult situation, when the USSR has fallen apart [sic], Uzbekistan is compelled to choose an effective course of development. The economic model, used by Turkey, is applicable to our republic, too (...) the more so, since our peoples are linked by traditional ties of friendship.’⁴⁸⁹

Turkey’s secular and western-oriented focus did not contradict President Karimov’s technocratic roles, namely his *undisputed authority*, focus on *development* and attempt to *bridge to other markets*. Therefore, Ankara saw its prestige and preponderance in the region increase. Indeed, the press highlighted that Turkey was

⁴⁸⁵ -Turkey to recognize all breakaway Soviet republicsø *Agence France Presse ó English*, 17 December 1991.

⁴⁸⁶ -Turkey cooperation agreements signed with Uzbekistanø *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 21 December 1991.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ -Interview with Uzbek Presidentø *TASS*, 20 December 1991.

considered the ideal partner by Washington to engage with the Central Asian Republics.⁴⁹⁰

Turkey and Uzbekistan reinforce their ties: The Century of the Turks

Having gradually consolidated his country's independence, President Karimov went to Davos, in February 1992, where he attended the World Economic Forum. He met on location with his Turkic counterparts in what was labelled as the first 'Turkish Summit' by some elements of the press.⁴⁹¹ Curiously, the word used was Turkish as opposed to Turkic, thereby admitting Turkey's leading role.

Uzbekistan's leader, despite his role of *defender of equality*, admitted during the summit that he, as well as his Central Asian neighbours, was grateful to his 'elder brother' for bringing their people closer.⁴⁹² This praise was not in vain, because Turkey's government soon reciprocated by boosting economic relations, which fitted nicely with President Karimov's calls for *technocratic relations*. Turkey's Foreign Minister, Hikmet Çetin, indicated in Davos that increased Turkish aid would be provided by the Exim Bank.⁴⁹³ In fact, Turkey's government was willing to set up credits worth 900 million dollars to galvanize trade. This, however, contributed to intra-role conflict, insofar as many Turkish nationals debated whether such huge sums should be delivered abroad rather than applied internally (Fuller 1993: 47). Later, though, Ankara would prove unable to provide all the loans it had promised (Winrow 2001: 204), which would hinder its ability to reinforce President Karimov's *technocratic* roles.

The relationship appeared to be consolidating as *technocratic* congruence between both parties became evident in the international public sphere. Consequently, President Karimov soon underlined the importance of cooperating with, as well as following, Turkey's economic model: 'Turkish way of development is more acceptable to us, first as all as a secular, civilized way of social development.'⁴⁹⁴

Tashkent's growing connection with Ankara reaffirmed President Karimov's supposedly *apolitical* and *de-ideologized* stance to politics, particularly when some speculated whether the Central Asian countries would follow the Iranian model (e.g. Cordahi 1992). President Karimov, however, also made a number of explicit cautionary

⁴⁹⁰ See the following reports by Kovaci (1991) and Lobe (1991).

⁴⁹¹ For a reference to the 'Turkish summit' see the following article: 'Turkish Leader Met Central Asian Chief in Davos' TASS, 3 February 1992.

⁴⁹² Ibid.

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ 'Speaking of borders means breaking up Central Asia' Islam Karimov Speaks in an Interview with Foreign Journalists' Official Kremlin News Broadcast, 15 May 1992.

remarks, highlighting that there was first Uzbekistan's own model and only then Turkey's: 'I am impressed by the fact that Turkey while simultaneously observing, preserving and developing its own national traditions (...) at the same time understands that bowing to these traditions is not an aim in itself (...) Therefore when I speak about Turkish model I mean it as a reference point. But Uzbekistan had its own path.'⁴⁹⁵ Clearly, Turkey was a partner, but one that had to be *equal* and not superior to Uzbekistan. Moreover, President Karimov's credibility was increasingly based on his roles of *seeker of genuine independence* (see Chapter III), which meant that Uzbekistan's economy was to be unique.

In July 1992, President Karimov visited Bursa to attend more meetings of the World Economic Forum. He was received by some of the city's high level officials which, once more, enhanced his role of *defender of Uzbekistan's image*. Mr Karimov confessed that Turkey carried a special place and that he was impressed by its culture and level of economic development.⁴⁹⁶ He then also took advantage of the change to bolster Ankara's own roles by praising its political heritage: 'we have also chosen the path of great Atatürk, and we will not renounce it.'⁴⁹⁷

Those comments probably reinforced Ankara's enthusiasm, as President Özal then called for more linkages between Turkey and Central Asia when organizing in November the first summit of 'Turkic-Speaking' countries. More importantly, he staked a high level of his own public credibility in the opening speech, as he laid down an ambitious agenda, comprising cultural, political and economic integration; future joint regulation; the implementation of a development bank; and the breaking down of walls separating the two regions.⁴⁹⁸ He then concluded with even more optimism by stating that 'if we can exploit this historic opportunity in the best possible way, if we do not make any mistakes, *the 21st century will be the century of the Turks*.'⁴⁹⁹

The speech reveals perhaps one of the first clear instances of role incompatibility between Presidents Özal and Karimov. The latter had predicated his roles on a type of bland *technocracy* that effectively appealed for *de-ideologized* relationships (see Chapter III). This meant, therefore, that cultural affinities and schemes beyond the economical were not coherent with his overall public message. President Özal was thus actually contradicting President Karimov's gradual appeals for *genuine independence*, in that he called for a time when borders no longer existed. It is

⁴⁹⁵ -Karimov Turkey is a point of Reference ó Ties with Russia ImmutableøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 3 September 1992.

⁴⁹⁶ -Uzbekistan President Visits Bursa; Praises Turkey as a model to be followedøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 2 July 1992.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ -Özal Welcomes Fellow Presidents ø21st Century will be the Century of the TurksøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 2 November 1992.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid.

also important to be aware that Uzbekistan's leader had, at the time, hinged a lot of his public credibility on protecting economic *stability* through a monetary union with Russia (see Chapters III and IV).

It should then not have come as a surprise the rather unenthusiastic appraisal given by President Karimov, as he barely mentioned political and cultural integration and focused just on the economic dimension.⁵⁰⁰ Evidently, the statement did little to reinforce Turkey's Ottomanist role, although Mr Karimov conceded that 'the Uzbek people had never forgotten the economic and spiritual aid extended by Turkey'.⁵⁰¹ The relationship, nonetheless, progressed and both parties continued augmenting their *prestige*. After President Karimov's trips to Turkey, it was Mr Özal's turn to visit Uzbekistan in April 1993, the first stop in his journey to the region. Once in Uzbekistan, Turkey's President argued that: 'we shall always be with our Uzbek brothers at all times (...) [and that] relations between Turkey and Uzbekistan, a powerful Central Asian state, are successfully developing to the mutual benefit of the two nations.'⁵⁰² Recognizing the power of Uzbekistan bolstered President Karimov's role of *defender of equality* and a *protector of Uzbekistan's image*. Uzbekistan's leader thus thanked Turkey's President for the visit to his 'ancestral homeland'.⁵⁰³ Thereafter, during a state dinner, President Özal highlighted that 'Uzbekistan is also experiencing the difficulties involved in moving to democracy and a market economy following the collapse of communism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union (...) these difficulties can be overcome by unity, patience and a lot of work, adding that Turkey is offering its experience in making this transition period easier for Uzbekistan.'⁵⁰⁴ The latter statement hints at paternalism and could also be regarded as a rather blatant denial of *equality*. Nevertheless, President Karimov admitted that their bilateral relations were 'eternal' and then focused mainly on the need for greater economic investment.⁵⁰⁵

VII.2. The first setback: 1994

Other than Russia, Turkey was perhaps the state at the time with the strongest ties to Central Asia and, therefore, a likely candidate for receiving Uzbekistani political refugees. This would lead to problems in the bilateral relationship seeing as it questioned President Karimov's *undisputed authority*. As far as Ankara was also

⁵⁰⁰ -Report on News Conference by Kazakh and Uzbek PresidentsøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 2 November 1992.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² Italics added, -Turkish President appraises Future ties with UzbekistanøTASS, 5 April 1993.

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ -Turkish President in Uzbekistan: Condemns Armenian öIncursionö into AzerbaijanøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 7 April 1993.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

concerned, the situation was not easy to resolve, for its western orientation meant that it could not avoid the rights of asylum seekers.

Muhammad Solih and pan-Turkic aspirations

The leader of Uzbekistan's *Erk* (freedom) party, Salay Madaminov - known usually by his pseudonym Muhammad Solih - was detained under house arrest on April 1993 (Cordahi 1993). He managed to escape soon after, though, and cross over into Turkey. Once in Istanbul, Mr Solih finished an important work entitled 'Toward Happier Days', which was eventually smuggled into Uzbekistan (Deibler 1996: 33).

Once a major opposition spokesman was abroad, the bilateral relationship was put to the test. In the early months of 1994, President Karimov attended a breakfast hosted by Turkey in Davos to discuss a potential oil pipeline project.⁵⁰⁶ A press report then deliberated that Uzbekistan's President had requested Turkey's newly elected President, Süleyman Demirel, to extradite Mr Solih (Tütüncü 2002: 20), although the content of the conversation was not revealed.

After the talk, it seems that no action was taken by Turkey and so the setting was conducive to inter-role conflict. President Karimov took quick action and recalled his Ambassador in February 1994.⁵⁰⁷ For Ankara the situation was complex given that Mr Solih represented more than just an asylum seeker. *Erk* (and also *Birlik*) was sympathetic to the 'Turkestan People's Movement' of Uzbekistan (Fierman 1997: 381) and other pan-Turkic ideals. Subsequently, there was a degree of role compatibility between Ankara and Mr Solih as both had hedged their public credibility on converging Ottomanist roles. In fact, Solih's work did not go unnoticed in Turkey and was translated by Şuayip Karakaş, a professor of Turkish and Turkic languages, at Erzurum's Atatürk University.

Public awareness was on the rise and President Karimov took more action by banning the distribution of the newspaper *Zaman* and restricting the Gülen movement's activities in Uzbekistan (the nature of the Fetullah Gülen's movement and its message will be made clearer below).⁵⁰⁸ Thereafter, elements of the Turkish media made their first public condemnation of President Karimov (Tütüncü 2002: 21). Moreover, repression increased. In the summer of 1994, reports indicated that leading

⁵⁰⁶ Demirel and Cetin discuss oil pipeline project with Central Asia leaders. *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 1 February 1994.

⁵⁰⁷ For references to growing inter-role conflict at the time, see 'Uzbekistan President Arrives for an Official Visit' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 23 June 1994.

⁵⁰⁸ Bill Park (2007: 54) acknowledges that the intention behind the decisions remains unclear (whether to prevent Turkey from harbouring Uzbekistani opposition, or to curb Gülen's movement's activities in Uzbekistan). Regardless of the motivation, though, the acts demonstrate a strong public grievance against the group's activities.

Erk activists were kidnapped from Almaty.⁵⁰⁹ Indeed, many of those individuals were actually apprehended and brought to Tashkent for what became known as the *Erk* party trial (Melvin 2000: 36).

Managing reconciliation

In May 1994, Turkey's foreign minister visited Tashkent and declared that trade between the two countries had not risen sufficiently.⁵¹⁰ The focus on economics (at least publicly) corresponded to President Karimov's *technocratic* roles. Ankara also acknowledged the importance of energy in the region and the need for arranging alternative trade routes to bypass Iran and Russia (Mater 1994), all of which were compatible with President Karimov's role of *bridging to other markets*.

After the crisis, rapprochement seemed on its way. President Karimov visited Turkey in June, and the visit was dominated by *technocratic* issues such as trade, rather than on political and cultural integration. At the meeting, Prime Minister Tansu Çiller underlined Turkey's interests in Uzbekistan and that 'these relations are carried out based on the principles of equality, non-interference in domestic affairs, and mutual interest, love and respect.'⁵¹¹ Later, however, during a state dinner, President Demirel confessed that he wished to increase the cultural connection between the two countries, but President Karimov barely responded to this appeal and, instead, focused on economic issues and investment opportunities.⁵¹²

The encounters allowed Uzbekistan's leader to extol his *technocratic* claims after the 1994 bilateral crisis and mitigate the Ottomanist and pan-Turkic roles that had been on the rise after 1991.⁵¹³ Turkey's government seems to have conceded to President Karimov's *undisputed authority* by requesting Mr Solih to abandon the country in the fall of 1994. Subsequently, President Karimov participated in the second Turkic States summit in October 1994. The event was then marked by a slight adjustment in Turkish rhetoric, which renounced discourses of cultural affinity and focused mainly on enhancing economic cooperation.⁵¹⁴

⁵⁰⁹ See 'Disappearance' Amnesty International, 8 July 1993, available at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR62/019/1994/es/dd7a8481-ebfd-11dd-9b3b-8bf635492364/eur620191994en.html>, accessed November 2012.

⁵¹⁰ 'Turkish foreign minister holds talks with Turkmen and Uzbek leaders' BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 3 May 1994.

⁵¹¹ 'Uzbek president on official visit to Turkey' BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 27 June 1994.

⁵¹² Ibid.

⁵¹³ Ibid.

⁵¹⁴ 'Turkic states' summit; President Demirel addresses summit participants' BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 20 October 1994.

VII.3. An increasingly difficult relationship: 1995-1996

In the mid-1990s, President Karimov's rhetoric gradually concentrated on *protecting stability* and securing Uzbekistan's *genuine independence* (partially as a response to the civil wars in Tajikistan and Afghanistan- see Chapter III). Change, though, was more visible in Turkey. Following the success in municipal elections of March 1994, the pro-Islamic Welfare Party (WP) received 21.1% of the national vote in December 1995 and formed a coalition government with Ms Çiller's True Path Party (TPP). Hakan Yavuz (1997: 63), for example, highlighted that this event marked a significant 'turning-point in the history of the Turkish Republic' seeing that, in June 1996, it had for the first time a Prime Minister whose ideological platform was guided by Turkey's Islamic heritage.

The shift in Turkey's politics impacted the bilateral relationship. If President Karimov had already shown discord regarding Turkey's Ottomanist roles, Islamic rhetoric in Ankara was an even greater compromise to his role of *de-ideologized* leader, particularly because Central Asia faced the spread of a potentially extreme interpretation of Islam (see Chapter III for more on the IMU).

Incompatibility over (a)political relationships

Before the rise of the WP, President Karimov's relationship with Turkey was also not at a high point. In April 1995, Uzbekistan's paper *Narodnoye Slovo* reported the story of an individual accused at the *Erk* trial, who he confessed he had sent a number of fellow comrades to Turkey.⁵¹⁵ Ankara, therefore, was increasingly portrayed as a harbour of political opposition, thereby affecting President Karimov's credibility as Uzbekistan's *undisputed authority*.

After the trial and some bilateral rapprochement in 1995, a degree of stability returned to the relationship, due to an adjustment in the public approaches taken by the Turkish government. For example, in July 1995, Turkish Prime Minister Çiller visited Uzbekistan and signed a memorandum for enhancing economic cooperation. Ms Çiller, who was Turkey's first female prime minister, argued that 'our main goal is to develop our relations with the brotherly countries in every field on the basis of mutual goodwill and benefits and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs.'⁵¹⁶

Prime Minister Çiller's rhetoric was thus fully compatible with President Karimov's role of *developer* of Uzbekistan. Yet, rapprochement was still not underway.

⁵¹⁵ -Uzbek paper criticizes Erk opposition figuresøBBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 17 April 1995.

⁵¹⁶ -Turkey boosts ties with UzbekistanøAgence France Presse ó English, 10 July 1995.

In August 1995, during the third Turkic summit, news reports highlighted that President Karimov threatened to not participate in upcoming Turkic conferences if they did not to avoid politicized issues. He was thus referring to some comments made by President Demirel, who had alluded to the Turkish-Cypriot predicament.⁵¹⁷ As a response, Uzbekistan's President was quoted defending that 'economic cooperation should be developed in the Framework of Central Asian nations'⁵¹⁸ - a further stab to Ankara's Ottomanist roles.

Explicit dislike for Turkey's new government

Ankara's own domestic situation was also not conducive to enhancing role compatibility. When Necmettin Erbakan of the WP became Prime Minister, President Karimov remonstrated against the path toward which Turkish politics was heading: 'we [Uzbekistan's government] have established extremely good relations with President Demirel, with Madam Çiller, and there are many other people. I'm not going to name all of them I do not know Mr Ebercan [sic]. I am not acquainted with him (...) But I must tell you that I have negative attitude to the ideology of this party. And I believe that today Turkey is in a kind of transitional period.'⁵¹⁹ The statement was reproduced in the Turkish press, although President Karimov cautioned that Ankara's secularism and connection to the West could not be shaken: 'it is impossible to turn Turkey away from the path of cooperation with the United States and Europe' (Akinci 1996).

The rise of the WP and its traditionalist message also induced role conflict within Turkey, resulting in mixed cues for Uzbekistani leadership. Indeed, just a few hours before leaving for another Turkic summit in Tashkent, President Demirel met with Mr Erbakan to mitigate the rising friction between the two parties.⁵²⁰ These antagonisms grew, in part, due to Mr Erbakan's new approach. Indeed, Turkey's new Prime Minister confessed that he hoped to create an economic community of Islamic states and then made Iran his first official visit (Winrow 2001: 202; Liel 2001). A few months later his newly formed government took the unprecedented step to support a

⁵¹⁷ -Turkic summit, shunning political integration, backs trade linksø*Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, 28 August 1995.

⁵¹⁸ -Karimov unsure about effectiveness of Turkic economic cooperationø*BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 29 August 1995.

⁵¹⁹ -Remarks by Islam Karimov, President of Uzbekistan regarding his country's investment potentialø*Federal News Service*, 26 June 1996.

⁵²⁰ -Erbakan breaks the ice with Demirel, asserts new imageø*Turkish Daily News*, 21 October 1996, available at <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/erbakan-breaks-the-ice-with-demirel-asserts-new-image.aspx?pageID=438&n=erbakan-breaks-the-ice-with-demirel-asserts-new-image-1996-10-21>, accessed October 2012.

Libyan resolution to the UN, which had been explicitly rejected by Uzbekistan's government and also the United States and Israel.⁵²¹

VII.4. Growing friction: 1997-1998

The rise of political Islam instigated role incompatibility. The 'transition' phase of Turkish politics, as Uzbekistan's leader had coined it, meant that Turkey's path was uncertain and thus hardly congruent with President Karimov's roles of *protecting stability* and fomenting *technocracy*. Ankara's internal debate over its future in the region reverberated into Central Asia and eventually looped back into Turkey as President Karimov strongly condemned a number of incidents.

Signs of a deteriorating relationship: Turkey's Sincan crisis

In January 1997, President Karimov's government decreed a law forbidding parties based on religion and ethnicity (Melvin 2000: 34). Turkish politics, in contrast, were facing an increase of religious rhetoric in the public sphere. The ideas proclaimed by Prime Minister Erbakan augmented the friction between him and the strongly secular National Security Council, which meant that the lack of internal *stability* and *technocratic* rhetoric barely converged with President Karimov's roles (Gozaydin 2009). However, Turkey's intra-role conflict quickly escalated, leading to a 'Kemalist restoration' in February 1997. Turkish armed forces stormed the city of Sincan, where a conference hosted by the local mayor was attended by both Prime Minister Erbakan and the Iranian Ambassador (Zurcher 2004: 300). Mr Erbakan had, at the time, delivered a speech with some Islamic innuendos and thus faced the full pressure of Turkey's secular armed forces. He was cornered and eventually resigned from his office in June. As further reprisal, the WP was also banned in the following year.

Tashkent responded to these incidents by recalling around 2000 students from Turkey in August 1997. President Karimov explained that his decision resulted from the path Turkish politics was heading toward: 'it is incomprehensible why Turkey, established by (Kemal) Ataturk, has allowed clerics to come to power. We considered your secular country to be a model. You have shocked us [sic].'⁵²²

⁵²¹ -Turkey supports Libyan UN resolutionø *Turkish Daily News*, 30 November 1996, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed September 2012.

⁵²² -Students recalled from Turkey over fears of Islamic influenceø *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 27 August 1997.

Ankara attempts to reassure President Karimov

Ankara's intra-role conflict was colliding with some of President Karimov's major roles and leading to bilateral role conflict. However, after the Sincan coup, Ankara's government responded by boosting its Kemalist roles. Following a 1997 summit, Presidents Karimov and Demirel discussed economic relations. Turkey's head of state defended that the relationship was intimate and facing a significant increase in trade. Evidently, another adjustment toward *technocratic* rhetoric fostered role compatibility and the Turkish Defence Minister travelled to Uzbekistan in January 1998.⁵²³

The greatest attempt at galvanizing the relationship, however, was made in the following April during Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz's visit to Uzbekistan. Before travelling to Tashkent, Turkey's Prime Minister underlined that 'currently our political relations (...) are perfect. But at the same time, I believe that we should spend greater efforts to improve the economic and commercial ties between our nations.'⁵²⁴ Ankara was, therefore, expounding the type of *technocratic* roles that had been on the rise before Prime Minister Erbakan's elections. Hence, the two sides were able to meet and sign several agreements.⁵²⁵ Accordingly, during a long press conference, President Karimov acknowledged the efforts that were being made and so paid homage to Turkey's secularism: 'I am a follower of Ataturk. If Ataturk's legacy encounters any threat in Turkey, we will feel the same danger in Uzbekistan. We endorse the Turkish government's attitude towards fundamentalism. Turkey's policies have always been a guide for Uzbekistan and the other Central Asian states.'⁵²⁶

Prime Minister Yilmaz responded to Mr Karimov's homage by highlighting that the relationship had improved considerably after Mr Erbakan's resignation: 'Turkey took an array of measures to prevent the resurrection of fundamentalism. Our government is determined to continue the anti-fundamentalist struggle within the principles of democracy and respect for people's religious freedom.'⁵²⁷

A small period of increased cooperation

The gradual public convergence between the two governments would then be put to a test in June at another Turkic summit meeting. President Demirel declared that the

⁵²³ -Uzbekistan Defence Minister makes high level visits in Ankaraø*Turkish Daily News*, 6 January 1998 available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed September 2012.

⁵²⁴ -PM Yilmaz seeks to boost ties with Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstanø*Turkish Daily News*, 13 April 1998, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed September 2012.

⁵²⁵ -Uzbek-Turkish Cooperation Documents Signedø*BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 13 April 1998.

⁵²⁶ -Turkey, Uzbekistan boost ties with four bilateral agreementsø*Turkish Daily News*, 14 April 1998, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed September 2012.

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

fifth summit would reinforce Turkic solidarity and make the next century a ‘turkic century’.⁵²⁸ Moreover, he confessed that these meetings would eventually allow for implementing a new silk road.⁵²⁹ Still, President Karimov continued publicly conveying some doubts about the advantages of the summits which continued evincing a number of pan-Turkic roles. He once more iterated that he was against them being used for political agendas and underlined that nationalistic sympathies had to be downplayed, especially for China’s Uyghur community. Alternatively, he proposed that the goal was to seek ‘improving economic relations’.⁵³⁰ Incidentally, these declarations were not welcomed by all in Ankara, as the deputy leader of Turkey’s Great Unity Party lambasted against Ankara not defending the world’s marginalized Turkic communities.⁵³¹

Yet, compared to the tense period of the mid 1990s, cooperation seemed to be on the horizon as a number of Turkish investments in Uzbekistan were soon underlined by the press.⁵³² Moreover, Turkey assumed an important stake in constructing the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline in the following months (connecting Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia). The consortium was signed in Ankara, with the presence and support of President Karimov, given that it corresponded to his role of *bridge to other markets* (for more on the Ankara pipeline scheme and its American support, see Chapter V). It would seem that Turkey’s regional prestige was at its peak and so the State Minister, Ahat Andican, stressed the importance of implementing a multidimensional policy focused on business and transport in the Caucasus and Central Asia.⁵³³ By the end of 1998, everything would suggest less friction and increased role compatibility.

⁵²⁸ ‘Turkic leaders meet in new Kazakh Capital’ *Turkish Daily News*, 10 June 1998, available at <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkic-leaders-meet-in-new-kazakh-capital.aspx?pageID=438&n=turkic-leaders-meet-in-new-kazakh-capital-1998-06-10>, accessed September 2012.

⁵²⁹ ‘Turkey’s trade with Turkic Countries Exceeds \$2 BLN in 1997’ *Interfax*, 9 June 1998.

⁵³⁰ ‘Uzbek leader warns helping Uighurs could upset relations with China’ *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 12 June 1998.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*

⁵³² ‘Uzbekistan, Turkey to produce buses and trucks’ *Turkish Daily News*, 12 June 1998, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed October 2012; and ‘Arcelik to produce refrigerators in Uzbekistan’ *Turkish Daily News*, 3 September 1998, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed October 2012.

⁵³³ ‘State Minister Andican stresses multidimensional economic policy’ *Turkish Daily News*, 19 November 1998, available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed September 2012.

VII.5. The attempt on President Karimov's life 1999-2000

The attacks of 16 February 1999 are the singular most important events in Uzbekistan's recent history after the Andijan Crisis.⁵³⁴ Six bombs exploded in Tashkent, 'killing sixteen people and injuring more than one hundred. The attack, which targeted key government buildings, called the stability of the nation into question for the first time' (Polat & Butkevich 2000: 541). The event affected President Karimov's public credibility, specifically his capacity to instil *stability* and remain an *undisputed authority*.

The severity of the attack was then followed by an equally powerful response by the government in Tashkent. Repression increased substantially and President Karimov soon demanded the full support of his closest international partners. The event thus had repercussions for the bilateral relationship, given Ankara's ambiguous support for Muhammad Solih.

The bombings and Turkey's first demonstration of support

After the bombings, President Karimov depicted the events at a press conference, where he described those killed, the explosions, the gunfights and the perpetrators.⁵³⁵ Then, in March, the press underlined that one of the potential instigators had been apprehended in Turkey.⁵³⁶ Ankara was therefore put on the spot, even more so in mid-March, when President Demirel travelled to Uzbekistan. Originally, the trip was designed to galvanize trade and supervise some of Turkey's investments in Samarkand.⁵³⁷ However, with the attacks questioning the credibility of President Karimov's *undisputed authority* and the regime's *stability*, the relevant issue-areas rapidly changed.

Before the arrival of Turkey's head of state, President Karimov confessed to the press that he had urged Interpol to extradite Mr Solih from Turkey, whom he accused of meeting Tohir Yo'ldosh (one of the leaders of the IMU). Uzbekistan's President argued that Mr Solih 'has sunk to the point of dealing with fanatics with whose support

⁵³⁴ The event is still to the present day shown on Uzbekistani TV as a reminder of its significance. Also, a quick visit to the Museum of the History of Uzbekistan in Tashkent reveals a whole section dedicated to the terrorist attacks.

⁵³⁵ 'Uzbekistan's President Survives Assassination Attempt' *Hurriyet*, 17 February 1999, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed August 2012.

⁵³⁶ 'Suspect involved in plot against Uzbek President Captured in Turkey' *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 4 March 1999.

⁵³⁷ 'Turkish, Uzbek presidents to discuss Islamic fundamentalism' *Hurriyet*, 16 March 1999, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed October 2012.

he intends to become president and to make Yuldash his military minister [sic].'⁵³⁸ Reports at the time also suggested that Mr Solih had instructed some men to travel with him to Turkey for bodyguard training, which, coupled with the fact that he was an acquaintance of Zelimkhan Yandarbiev, the former President of Chechnya, increased speculation regarding whether he had actually been involved in the February attacks (Polat & Butkevich 2000: 548).

At the press conference that followed, President Karimov voiced strong public support for Turkey, calling his counterpart an 'elder brother' whose support he was thankful for in an 'unstable and changeable world.' He then went on to describe the assailants, accusing both Mr Yo'ldosh and Mr Solih.⁵³⁹ Curiously, a BBC reporter then asked the Turkish President if Mr Solih was still on Turkish soil, to which President Demirel responded affirmatively.⁵⁴⁰ Nevertheless, Uzbekistan's leader cautioned that his country was still compiling a case against Muhammad Solih and that it was difficult for Ankara to extradite an individual specialized in illegal travel. He argued additionally that Uzbekistan's government had not yet appealed to Turkish authorities, but that 'on the contrary, I would like to thank the Turkish president, Mr Demirel, for his condolences he expressed to our government and people and for his readiness to render a help to fight a common enemy, a common evil - which is currently an evil for the whole world – terrorism.'⁵⁴¹ It would seem that President Karimov refused to put his counterpart on the spot, even though he hinted that he was expecting full cooperation.

Crisis in the relationship

In spite of Turkey's symbolic show of support and President Karimov's acknowledgement, the actions that followed evinced role conflict rather than compatibility. This became more apparent when Tashkent closed twenty Turkish schools in the country, most of them connected to the Gülen movement. It is important to bear in mind that Ankara, too, had played a part in discrediting the Gülen movement's activities, given that, after Prime Minister Erbakan's resignation, Mr Gülen was targeted for trial by Turkey's secular establishment, which forced him to seek exile in the United States (Krespin-Sharon 2009: 52).⁵⁴² So, given Turkey's own intra-role

⁵³⁸ 'Uzbekistan urges Interpol to help track down terrorists' *Interfax Russian News*, 15 March 1999.

⁵³⁹ 'Uzbek and Turkish Presidents Give Press Conference: Full Version' *BBC Monitoring Central Asia*, 18 March 1999.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

⁵⁴² In fact, Mr Gülen was indicted for a crime in absentia by the Turkish judiciary in 2000.

conflict, between rigid secularism and renewed political Islam, it is not a surprise that the movement's schools were targeted specifically by President Karimov.⁵⁴³

Due to the complicated context, the Turkish press surmised that Tashkent's actions were provoked by Ankara's delay in extraditing the two suspects. Indeed, the hold-up seems to have been instigated by the fact that they had appealed to the European Court of Human Rights.⁵⁴⁴ Kiev, in contrast, showed complete solidarity and quickly extradited three Uzbekistani citizens, along with the brother of Mr Solih, to Uzbekistan in the middle of March. Furthermore, it quickly became public knowledge that Mr Solih left Turkey in April and was allowed to stay in Norway.⁵⁴⁵

For Ankara, the rise in the intra-role conflict reflected that it would have to compromise between pro-western and pan-Turkic roles, especially because the extradition would be subject to a court hearing in the European Court of Human Rights.⁵⁴⁶ The situation also reverberated in the Turkish press as many diplomats, academics and politicians expressed their opinions on how to solve the predicament.⁵⁴⁷

President Karimov, however, continued strengthening his role of *undisputed authority*. Having now staked his credibility in opposing Turkish, or even Islamic encroachment, he refused to attend the April 2000 Turkic summit in Baku,⁵⁴⁸ prompting reflection within Turkey. The media especially contemplated whether Turkey had in fact 'Missed the bus in Central Asia?' (Cevik 2000), and if a new approach was needed.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴³ It is also relevant to acknowledge that, aside from the rumours circulating around the movement, Mr Gülen was opposed to the 'iranization of society' and endorsed a more complex message than what was portrayed by Turkey's secular establishment (Park 2007: 9). Mr Gülen had actually been in favour of the 1980 secular coup in Turkey, as well as for the resignation of the WP's chairman in 1997. However, debate regarding the nature of the movement is still pervasive in both public and academic circles. See, for example, Rachel Krespin-Sharon (2009) particularly negative depiction of the movement and Greg Barton (2009) different interpretation. Even in 2011, speculation came out as to whether Gülen's actions in Central Asia were supported by American intelligence services. See 'Gülen, the CIA's favourite Imam; United States/CENTRAL ASIA' *Intelligence Online*, 6 January 2011.

⁵⁴⁴ 'Uzbek court sentences six dissidents to death' *Turkish Daily News*, 29 June 1996, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed September 2012.

⁵⁴⁵ For more on Mr Solih's departure, see 'Salikh asks for political asylum in Czech Republic - Lawyer' in Co kunarslan, H. (ed) (2006: 49), *The Opponent* (Istanbul, Komen Publications).

⁵⁴⁶ Turkey eventually extradited Uzbek political activists, which then led to a long judicial case in the European court, lasting until 2004. For more on this story, see the article: 'European court rehears Uzbek deportation case' *Turkish Daily News*, 18 March 2004, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed September 2012.

⁵⁴⁷ 'Uzbeks' mistrust of Turkey creates diplomatic tension' *Turkish Daily News*, 17 June 1999, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed September 2012.

⁵⁴⁸ 'President pleased with summit' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts* 10 April 2000.

⁵⁴⁹ See the reports of Ilter (2000) and Bagci (2000). Also Prime Minister Ecevit was reported to have met with Uzbekistan's ambassador in June 1999, where he confessed that Tashkent's mistrust was baseless. See the following reports: 'PM Ecevit: Uzbek mistrust baseless' *Turkish Daily News*, 22 June 1999, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed September 2012.

The situation, therefore, did not improve and controversy enveloped throughout the year. In effect, the wave of political repression in Uzbekistan continued⁵⁵⁰ and another scandal erupted when some of those implicated in the February bombings confessed in June that former Prime Minister Erbakan had provided them with assistance.⁵⁵¹ Ankara did, however, in the end, cooperate with Tashkent and extradited the suspects to Uzbekistan.

Ankara's renewed attempt at rapprochement

As controversy around the 1999 attacks continued, Ankara – and, in particular, the newly-elected President, Ahmet Sezer, – sought rapprochement. The establishment, therefore, did not relinquish its public pan-Turkic sympathies and Ottomanist aspirations (perhaps in order to counteract the rise of controversial political Islam). Accordingly, news reports in September detailed that Turkey's Foreign Minister and also President Sezer met with President Karimov in the United Nations.⁵⁵² Uzbekistan's leadership confirmed the meetings during a TV report a few days later by stating that he was now satisfied that Turkey had decided to 'help to Uzbekistan to guarantee its independence, security, Uzbek people's peace and stability, and I think that this will happen for sure.'⁵⁵³

President Karimov thus hinted that Turkey would perhaps need to do more to support his roles of *protector of stability* and *undisputed authority*. Subsequently, Ankara's Minister of Interior visited Tashkent in late September 2000 and stated that Uzbekistani forces were going to be trained in Turkey in order to ensure Uzbekistan's *stability*.⁵⁵⁴ Then, a few weeks later, it was the turn of Turkey's Foreign Minister to visit Uzbekistan, soon followed by Mr Sezer. It would seem that solidarity was being highlighted in the public sphere, insofar as President Karimov's *prestige* roles were all bolstered after the controversial attacks.⁵⁵⁵ If Ankara had hesitated in the spring of 1999, its press now underlined that the relationship was entering a new phase, which

⁵⁵⁰ See for example: 'Uzbeks purge Muslims from academia' *Turkish Daily News*, 22 October 1999, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed September 2012.

⁵⁵¹ 'Uzbek dissidents claim Erbakan helped them' *Turkish Daily News*, 7 July 1999, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed October 2012.

⁵⁵² See 'Cem to meet Turkic-speaking countries' foreign ministers in New York' *Turkish Daily News*, 8 September 2000, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed September 2012; and 'President Sezer to Visit Uzbekistan in October' *Turkish Daily News*, 16 September 2000, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed October 2012.

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ 'Uzbek forces to be trained in Turkey' *Turkish Daily News*, 19 September 2000, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed September 2012.

⁵⁵⁵ On Ankara's support, see for instance 'Full support from Turkey to Uzbekistan in fight against terrorism' *Turkish Daily News*, 3 October 2000, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed September 2012.

was focused more on assuring mutual security.⁵⁵⁶ Still, it is important to note that President Karimov refused to participate in the April 2001 Turkic Summit in Ankara.⁵⁵⁷ Tashkent was perhaps no longer endorsing these conferences, where Turkey's leading status was frequently emphasized. Bilateral contacts, though, did decrease in the short-run as a number of bilateral military agreements were signed throughout 2002.⁵⁵⁸ Much like with Berlin and Washington (see Chapters V and VI), discretion was the new approach, increasing speculation on the consequences of the new way of engaging with Central Asia (e.g. Meixler 2001).

VII.6. A Relationship that never (re)ignited: 2001-2010

In spite of a strong show of support in 2000, the number of high-level public visits between Uzbekistani and Turkish authorities decreased substantially after 2002. It would seem that President Karimov no longer compromised on *equality* by playing up to Turkey's leadership aspirations and Ottomanist roles. On the other hand, Ankara's political environment changed with the rise of the Justice and Welfare Party (AKP - *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*). The AKP was, at its core, a modern Islamist party that pursued acceptance in the West, which contrasted somewhat with its more idealistic WP predecessor. As such, by subsiding Ottomanist aspirations, and also being more open to Turkey's Islamic and traditional heritage, Ankara barely converged with the strong secular and *technocratic* roles of President Karimov. Additionally, Turkish politics faced a rise in intra-role conflict that hardly fostered an image of *stability* in the public sphere. For instance, Turkey's armed forces continued acting as secular guardians when they executed an 'e-coup' in April 2007, by threatening to take measures against the AKP through their online website (Taspinar 2007: 114).

AKP and the first contacts

In November 2002, AKP won the parliamentary elections and formed a new government. Recep Erdoğan became Prime Minister and completed his rise to power, even though he remained highly controversial. Indeed, he originally had a judicial case opened against him due to some nuanced Islamic remarks he made when Mr Erbakan's WP was banned (Zurcher 2004: 300-204).

⁵⁵⁶ 'A New Chapter in Turco-Uzbek Relations' *Hurriyet*, 8 October 2000, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed October 2012.

⁵⁵⁷ 'Turkey and Uzbekistan to discuss trade' *Turkish Daily News*, 17 April 2001, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed October 2012.

⁵⁵⁸ 'Kivrikoglu visits Uzbekistan; signs deal for military assistance' *Turkish Daily News*, 19 March 2002.

On a bilateral level, Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister travelled to Ankara in October 2003, where he met with Mr Erdoğan. The economical dimension of the trip was highlighted as the two parties travelled with a large entourage of businessmen.⁵⁵⁹ Ankara's approach still remained discrete and focused on *stability* which, therefore, did not contradict President Karimov's role set. Indeed, before Mr Erdoğan's visit to Uzbekistan, he donated a number of military vehicles to Uzbekistan's army.⁵⁶⁰ On arrival, the Turkish Prime Minister also evinced a degree of continuity by declaring that 'we appreciate the solidarity that Uzbekistan displays with the international community in the fight against terrorism. In light of this, we deem cooperation in military and security fields to be very important and we are determined to develop cooperation in these fields.'⁵⁶¹ It is important to be aware that, at that time, Tashkent was under the spotlight of the global fight against terror. So, Prime Minister Erdoğan's statement further reinforced Mr Karimov's *prestige*.

The Impact of the Andijan Crisis

The encounters in 2003 did not, however, materialize into any sort of increased cooperation between Tashkent and Ankara. The latter progressively turned itself toward Europe and downplayed Ottomanist roles. Still, the Turkish foreign ministry did publicly support its 'brotherly' counterpart, such as in March 2004, after Tashkent was forced to deal with terrorist attacks.⁵⁶²

Later, the Andijan crisis of May 2005 sparked internal debate in Turkey, much like the 1999 crisis. Following those tragic events, President Abdullah Gül of Turkey conveyed a mixed message; condemning, on the one hand, the use of force by protestors and, on the other, calling for greater moderation: 'we think that the security forces of the Uzbekistan government, reacting with common sense and demonstrating moderation towards demonstrators and the civilian population, will avoid further bloodshed in the region.'⁵⁶³ Ankara, therefore, cautiously placed itself in the middle ground; distancing itself from some of the West's incisive condemnation, yet hardly providing the level of support shown by Moscow and Beijing.

⁵⁵⁹ -Uzbek foreign minister in Ankara to discuss tiesø*Hurriyet*, 28 October 2003, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed September 2012.

⁵⁶⁰ -TSK donates military vehicles to Uzbek Armyø*Cihan News Agency*, 3 December 2003, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed September 2012.

⁵⁶¹ -Turkey, Uzbekistan to boost security, trade cooperationø*Turkish Daily News*, 20 December 2003, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed September 2012.

⁵⁶² -Turkey denounces Uzbek attacksø*Turkish Daily News*, 31 March 2004, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed October 2012.

⁵⁶³ -Britain slams rights abuse, Turkey and OSCE urge restraint in Uzbekistanø*Agence France Presse ó English*, 15 May 2005.

It is important to be aware that Turkey could not fully avoid being connected to the Andijan events, even if very tenuously. It seems that the Andijan crisis was instigated by a relatively unknown conservative organization, Akrimaya, whose members, at time, were unfairly arrested by the local governor. Reports also stated that the Akrimaya network was inspired by Said Nurci, a Turkish Islamic thinker, who had also influenced the Fetullah Gülen movement.⁵⁶⁴

Meanwhile, intra-role conflict was sparked in Turkey as parliamentarians contested President Gül's statement about the Andijan crisis. Curiously, some AKP deputies were unsatisfied with the silence that their President had adopted after his statement and appealed for stronger condemnation.⁵⁶⁵ The opposition, though, was also not consensual, as some proposed supporting President Karimov's government.⁵⁶⁶ Consequently, in the months that followed, the press and various renowned Turkish officials debated whether or not Turkey was still losing its ground in Central Asia.⁵⁶⁷

The debate in the public sphere led to discontinuity, in that it instigated Prime Minister Erdoğan to organize a new Turkic Summit in Antalya in 2006. However, once more, President Karimov refused to attend. Besides role incompatibilities between the AKP and Mr Karimov, it also seems clear that Tashkent remained concerned with *protecting stability* as it was probably unconvinced of the political climate in Turkey. This would then clarify why, in 2007, a number of Uzbekistani citizens were prevented from attending a seminar in Turkey.⁵⁶⁸

Turkey's Ottomanist roles reborn and President Karimov's disinterest

Following his inability to lure Uzbekistani leadership to the 2006 summit, President Gül declared, in late 2007, that he was aiming to revive Turkey's relationship with the countries in the region.⁵⁶⁹ Bilaterally, however, both sides demonstrated compatibility on *technocratic* issues, as a number of business and aid agreements were developed between 2008 and 2010.⁵⁷⁰ So, like with Moscow in the 1990s (see Chapter IV), it

⁵⁶⁴ See for example Alisher Ilkhamov's (2005b) piece on the Akrimaya.

⁵⁶⁵ 'Turkish ruling party MPs criticize government's silence on Uzbekistan' *BBC Monitoring Europe - Political* Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 19 May 2005.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁷ See for example the following references: 'Turkey loses track in Central Asia' *Turkish Daily News*, 22 May 2005, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed October 2012; Arslan (2005).

⁵⁶⁸ 'Uzbek activists prevented from attending seminar in Turkey' *The Times of Central Asia*, 30 January 2007.

⁵⁶⁹ 'Gül to revive relations with Central Asia' *Turkish Daily News*, 19 November 2007, available via <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>, accessed October 2012.

⁵⁷⁰ See the following cases documented in the press: 'Turkey's SIS to invest \$141 mln in modernization of Uzbek textile mill' *Russia & CIS Business and Financial Newswire*, 17 April 2008; 'Turkish Health Minister to Visit Uzbekistan' *Anadolu Agency*, 2 December 2009; 'Türk isadamları yarin Taskent'te

would appear that Tashkent would not endorse multilateral schemes that diluted its *political equality*.

Moreover, Tashkent continued *protecting stability* and showed little tolerance toward several religious or quasi-religious organizations of Turkish origin. For instance, in February 2009, Uzbekistan's court jailed eight individuals considered to be part of a Turkish Nurchilar or Nurcular movement (inspired by the renowned Turkish scholar, Said Nurci).⁵⁷¹ Thereafter, in March 2010, Uzbekistani security forces again arrested another forty suspects accused of having ties to a Nurchilar society.⁵⁷²

Given public speculation over AKP's sympathies with Said Nurci, and even the Fethullah Gülen movement,⁵⁷³ Turkey's ruling party continued to be indirectly implicated in events. Their public agenda very much contrasted with President Karimov's roles, which could perhaps explain the political distance arising between Uzbekistan and Turkey. For example, in August 2010, President Gül appealed for President Karimov to participate in that year's Turkic summit,⁵⁷⁴ which Tashkent again refused to attend.

In sum, after the role incompatibilities of the 1990s, the relationship never recovered. Indeed, it is hard to argue that the relationship ever had any particular moment of strong cooperation. There were of course a few instances of mild role compatibility, particularly regarding *stability* and *technocracy*. Yet, Ankara lacked the economic power of Berlin and Washington to fully bolster President Karimov's roles of *developer* and *mercantilist entrepreneur*. These issues led to lack of role congruence, and eventually little cooperation, as society in Turkey debated the future of Islam and Ottomanism, which persistently contradicted Tashkent's appeal for *equality* and *de-ideologized* relations.

toplaniyorø *Cihan News Agency*, 14 December 2010; -Özbek-Türk Isadamlari Taskent'te bulustuø *Cihan News Agency*, 11 March 2009.

⁵⁷¹ -Uzbek court jails members of Turkish Islamic sectø *UzReport.com*, 19 February 2009.

⁵⁷² -Uzbekistan: 40 suspected members of banned religious group arrestedø *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 15 March 2010.

⁵⁷³ See Rachel Krespin-Sharonø (2009) article for a long narrative linking the AKP to a number of conspiracy theories around the Fetullah Gülen movement and other organizations inspired by Said Nurci.

⁵⁷⁴ -Cumhurbaskani Gül'den Kerimov'a davetø *Cihan News Agency*, 30 August 2010.

Conclusion

Role theory is one way of depicting interaction in the public sphere and emplotting how actors cope with challenges to public credibility. Roles are more than just interesting typologies and allow for identifying, shaping and suggesting probable action in addition to depicting how several issues beyond national security affect international relationships.

From 1989 to 2010, the notion of self-reliance persistently captures President Karimov's role set, which was centred on *seeking genuine independence* and *defending Uzbekistan's international equality*. Annette Bohr (1998: 43) had already perceptively indicated that President Karimov was concerned with assuring national independence (see Chapter I). Similarly, self-reliance shows that Tashkent's roles were relatively consistent, in spite of the friction existing in some important relationships. Indeed, arguing for self-reliance implies that it is difficult to conceive of alignment - closely cooperating with a country on security goals (David 1990: 234) - in the ways described by Fumagalli (2007a) and Aneschi (2010) (see Chapter I).

David's (1990) characterization of alignment is broad, and so Robert Axelrod and Robert Keohane's (1985: 226) classic definition is necessary to understand what is meant by cooperation: the adjustment of behaviour according to the roles of the other (see Chapter II). Having understood the two concepts, it is clear by definition that alignment is more restrictive than cooperation, depending essentially on security and close interaction. Consequently, all the narratives show that it is hard to deduce unequivocally whether Uzbekistan's relationships had a strong security dimension and, more importantly, if they were ever close. Whereas periods of cooperation were certainly observed, they could hardly be described as cases of alignment.

As concerns security, President Karimov's relationships were predicated by many relevant issue-areas, such as prestige and economic development. At least in the public sphere, President Karimov manifested that he was hoping to obtain American foreign investment as well as recognition as an equal partner (see Chapter V). So, cooperation was certainly possible, but it was not driven by one-dimensional security goals. Yet, if alignment is understood more as 'close cooperation', it is clear that there was never any great proximity between Tashkent and any single power. President Karimov increased reformist rhetoric and implemented some liberalizing measures after signing the 2002 Partnership with the United States, but simultaneously rejected anything that questioned or weakened his own authority. Similarly, after joining the CSTO, Uzbekistan's leader immediately called for combining the organization with Eurasec (see Chapter IV), thereby contesting multilateralism and Russian influence in

the same way he had done in the 1990s. Even with Berlin, where inter-role conflict was less pervasive, compatibility existed only in a few roles, such as *developing Uzbekistan's economic future* and *protecting stability*, which meant that the two sides were unable to cooperate fully once Germany sought greater influence in Central Asia in 2007. From the outset, President Karimov's roles were hardly conducive to fostering close relationships of any sort, regardless of some adjustments in action between Tashkent and other governments.

The narratives also show that public interaction had strong impact on bilateral relationships, thereby challenging some balancing models and Great Game narratives (e.g. Aneschi 2010; Smith 2009; Tomé 2007; Fumagalli 2007a; Akbarzadeh 2005; Berman 2004; Menon 2003; Rashid 2002: 150-182). In other words, predicating interaction as geopolitical, tactical and rational, rather than as a highly adaptive and publicly contested process, prompted by unpredictable incidents, ignores important aspects of Uzbekistan's relationships. Recalling Matteo Fumagalli's (2007a) use of omnibalancing; the scholar assumed strict preferences based on survival that compelled regimes to balance against both internal and external threats (see Chapter I). Each narrative herein, in contrast, demonstrates that instead of constantly weighing the pros and cons, political actors adapted themselves to the situations at hand in order to keep credibility. As such, there is a lot more to Walter Benjamin's (1940) 'here-and-now' (*jetztzeit*) than to a linear trend, meaning that relationships evolved according to how roles cohered at particular moments in time rather than through clear-cut strategic calculation. As laid out in Chapter IV, for example, Uzbekistan's relationship with Russia improved from 2000 to 2007 not because of a deliberate tactic to counterweigh Washington, but due mainly to Mr Putin's new approach, which was compatible with Mr Karimov's roles. So, even though both concepts – balancing and role compatibility – depict similar outcomes, their repercussions for understanding the region are highly dissimilar. Whereas balancing suggests a sort of mechanistic reaction based on exogenous interests, bilateral roles imply that cooperation and conflict evolve according to contingencies of a particular public relationship, not necessarily dependent on the intrinsic interests of both parties.

It is important to emphasize, nevertheless, that the aim is not to make roles seem all-explanatory. Naturally, given the assumptions made, private issues are left open to interpretation, such as ideas and the intrinsic motivations that shape intent. Arguing that roles persisted does not imply that the actions taken were not actually manipulative, i.e. seeking to obtain something other than what was being publicly conveyed. For that reason, one cannot ignore that explanations based on strategic/tactical behaviour reveal other important elements of Uzbekistan's

international relations. Public roles leave some questions open given that all the narratives from Chapters IV to VII disclose at least one moment in time when a government strategically targeted another's influence. Even Germany, for example, counteracted Russia's growing energy supremacy by putting forward the 2007 European strategy. These instances probably also reveal the circumstances in which the actual intentions were not congruent with roles. This means that relative gains, strategic interaction and therewith geopolitics cannot be ignored, as Cooley (2012, 2009) clearly showed. For example, the timings for when Uzbekistan left Eurasec, coinciding more or less with the removal of EU sanctions, are not fully explained herein. It is also difficult to ignore that GUAM had a security dimension designed to offset Russia and so it is likely that President Karimov's decision to join the organization was not solely derived from his public role of *bridge to other markets*, as indicated in Chapter V. Likewise, Roy Allison (2004: 287-288) argued that one of the reasons for Moscow's engagement with Central Asian Republics was to constrain Uzbekistani influence, which tacitly matches Donald Carlisle's (1995b: 76-77) thesis that Tashkent aspired to become a regional leader. This would suggest that the differences between Moscow and Tashkent over Tajikistan in the 1990s were perhaps more concerned with leadership issues in Central Asia rather than just the public calls for *defending equality* and *voicing non-militarism* (see Chapter IV).

Yet, in spite of the problem of volition, Uzbekistan's leader still had to face credibility problems as friction increased in the public sphere. Regardless of backstage negotiations or secluded motives, public incompatibility between Russia and Uzbekistan during the Civil War in Tajikistan galvanized conflict. As the stakes escalated, the way President Karimov publicly accused Russia of compromising Uzbekistan's *equality* (see Chapter IV) made any sort of public or private compromise difficult if credibility was not to be hampered. In sum, one cannot ignore how interaction takes place in the public sphere and its importance to the political process; otherwise actors would not deliver speeches, appear in press conferences or conduct interviews. An ideal account, like a thorough biography, would include the public as well as the private dimension, whereby one could understand the context in which individuals were compelled to act in a particular way. Roles reveal part of that story, given that they disclose which issue-areas become prominent and how actors construct their agenda through past and present interaction, which is perhaps better than assuming strict preferences for such an opaque regime. The remainder of the conclusion thus revisits some of the main findings using the language of role theory and sketches ideas for future research (for the framework of role theory see Chapter II).

A relatively stable role set does not mean that public credibility remained unblemished. President Karimov adopted slightly contradictory roles both during the collapse of the ruble zone and after the Andijan crisis, which effectively compelled him to legitimate his actions in the public sphere.

Chapter III revealed that President Karimov invoked a self-reliant role set based mainly on *defending Uzbekistan's equality* and *seeking genuine independence*. His other roles can be classified under the relatively flexible group-types of technocracy, authenticity and prestige, which allowed President Karimov to adapt to discontinuities over time by gradually reemphasizing his priorities - as suggested by James Rosenau (1987: 57-72) and Cameron Thies (2009; 2001). Indeed, the paradigms of Sebastian Harnisch (2012: 56) and George McCall and Jerry Simmons (1966: 95-99) (see Chapter II) can be adapted to Uzbekistan, as President Karimov coped with credibility problems by legitimating his actions through changing his commitment from technocracy to authenticity.

Gradual shifts, however, which were clearly noticeable after 2005, also helped reveal incoherencies and ambiguities within certain roles. For example, when *defending Uzbekistan's equality* and *seeking genuine independence*, it is important to recall that the former is an end and the latter a process. So it is rather unfeasible to call for their simultaneous fulfilment. In fact, the root for this problem derives from the ambiguity of *defending equality* and how it can be appropriated by all three group-types.

In President Karimov's case, the concept of equality includes notions of respect for sovereignty, cultural authenticity and economic development. However, as President Karimov progressively switched his commitment from technocracy to authenticity from 2003, questions are immediately raised: were Uzbekistan's economic achievements capable of being generalized to a so-called 'civilized' status among the world's powers, or was Uzbekistan's model of development designed to shelter its culture, preventing it from being compared to others? In other words, would equality be based on respect for authenticity or on economic technocracy? The question remained unanswered. Evidently, the conflict also affected the relevance of genuine independence, i.e. the capacity to become militarily and economically powerful enough not to depend on others. If authenticity was on the rise, reaching genuine independence was no longer as important as it had been in the 1990s.

So, the degree of 'complementarity' between cultural authenticity and technocracy allowed for adapting to role discontinuities, but their contradictory nature

also enhanced the ambiguity behind specific roles, especially when *defending Uzbekistan's equality*. Obviously it is difficult to argue that any sort of role set can be perfectly coherent and impervious to inconsistency. President Karimov's public message from the start was both flexible and cohesive enough to last for such a long period. As the times changed, though, it was clear that a degree of change was required if relationships were not to be affected. Indeed, at the date this thesis is being concluded, President Karimov is aged seventy-five. Someday Tashkent will have new leadership, which will inevitably have to reconstruct or reproduce the roles propounded during President Karimov's tenure in office. When that happens, the conflict between Uzbekistani authenticity and pragmatic technocracy will have to be better addressed, otherwise it will remain unclear. However, imagining that these core issues are gradually modified, Uzbekistan's government will most likely cease to be considered self-reliant. It may either progress toward isolationism, perhaps by bolstering its authenticity vis à vis the rest of the world, or gradually tilt toward technocracy and thereby allow for a degree of economic opening.

The impact of roles in bilateral relationships

One of the main reasons for breaking down this thesis into distinct bilateral relations was to downplay the logic of geopolitics and relative gains (see Introduction and Chapter I) and demonstrate that each relationship had a story of its own that did not depend necessarily on what was ensuing with other actors. Overall, the following summaries of Chapters IV through VII apply role theory's rich terminology to summarize the outcomes of each relationship (see Chapter II on role theory).

As concerns Tashkent and Moscow, the narrative's diachronic dimension evinces how President Karimov's roles were constructed and reinforced by interacting with Moscow. The account also shows reciprocity, in that Uzbekistan's responses played a part in influencing Russian leadership. Their relationship began in a particularly complicated setting, as Mr Gorbachev balanced between keeping the Soviet Union intact and introducing reform, to which President Karimov responded with caution. So, in the early 1990s, Uzbekistan's leader gradually differentiated himself from pro-democratic rhetoric and to become an *undisputed authority*, an *equal* among others, a *technocrat*, an *expert on economics*, a *seeker of stability* and a *defender of Uzbekistan's image*. Nevertheless, when the Soviet system collapsed, President Karimov began facing intra-role conflict, in that seeking to be an *equal* to Russia was hardly compatible with preserving the economic foundation of the Soviet Union. As this conflict led to friction between Tashkent and Moscow's reformers, President Karimov

separated formally from Russia after the end of the ruble zone, in 1993, which reinforced his roles of *seeker of genuine independence* and *defender of Uzbekistani equality*. On the other hand, the Civil Wars in Tajikistan and Afghanistan increased President Yeltsin's will to serve as an intermediary for regional Mr Karimov claimed that *equality* was being denied. Consequently, roles were hardly compatible and friction increased, especially as a number of bilateral issue-areas remained unresolved during the 1990s – such as debts and the future of the TAPCO plant –, all of which was portrayed in the public sphere as connected to Tashkent *seeking genuine independence* and *defending equality*.

President Putin's election in 2000 led to a discontinuity. McCall and Simmons's (1966: 95-99) legitimating acts fit nicely with the events that followed: Moscow's growing lack of success in engaging with Uzbekistan led it to adjust its responses by 'nicifying' its actions. President Putin propounded Eurasian ideas, thereby paying heed to President Karimov's appeals. Visiting Uzbekistan first among all others bolstered Tashkent's *prestige* group-types, and then a focus on *technocracy* and *de-ideologized* issues was compatible with President Karimov's own roles, leading to more cooperation in the international public sphere from 2000 to 2007.

Still, disparities in roles remained as discontinuities made inter-role conflict resurface. After the Andijan crisis, *defending Uzbekistan's equality* continued to be a permanent block in the relationship between the two countries, since President Karimov stuck to his word and so refused to allow Russia to reinforce its presence in the region. By 2010, it was difficult not to make parallels with the 1990s. Moscow publicly demonstrated that it was acting to preserve its own status in Central Asia, which was diametrically opposed to President Karimov's claims for *undisputed authority, prestige* and *equality*.

Elsewhere, the story of President Karimov's relations with Washington is emplotted by deep role malintegration. Unlike Uzbekistan's relationship with Russia, where instability derived from conflict over *equality* and *seeking genuine independence*; with the United States, most roles - excluding *protecting stability* - were barely compatible in the public sphere. The United States, nevertheless, had a number of roles that were appealing to President Karimov's role set. Being the world's military and economic superpower meant that it could help reinforce a number of President Karimov's roles, namely boost *Uzbekistan's great image*, serve to *bridge other markets* and *develop the country's economic future*. Moreover, as the situation in Central Asia became increasingly unstable, Washington could have been an important regional security partner and assisted President Karimov fulfil his role of *protector of stability*. Still, Washington's reformist stance meant that it distanced itself from Uzbekistan until

the mid 1990s, which harmed President Karimov's *image* and *undisputed authority*; even more so when other Central Asian Republics were praised.

Eventually, though, Central Asia became more prominent in the public sphere as its economic potential and insecurity became more visible. Washington progressively adjusted its roles and began focusing on geopolitical *stability* in the region, allowing for greater cooperation with Tashkent. Even so, this eventually led to intra-role competition between the DoD and the DoS, seeing as the latter's credibility was based on pursuing reform in Central Asia.

After the Colour Revolutions, role conflict became unmanageable, even after the 11 September attacks and the partnership agreement of 2002. The revolutions increased Uzbekistan's visibility greatly and so affected President Karimov's credibility as an *undisputed authority* and *economic expert*. On the other hand, interacting with a strongly authoritarian state also harmed Washington's own credibility as a purveyor of democracy and political reform. The role conflict gradually intensified after 2003 and erupted after the 2005 Andijan crisis, leading to temporary withdrawal from interaction in order to resolve this collapse in public credibility. Another legitimating mechanism was made evident when the DoS switched its role for the region, as Central Asia was included in the South Asian department and removed from European Affairs. President Karimov, on the other hand, faced a grave challenge to his credibility and so pressed to condemn his audience (namely the West) for not supporting his actions, and refocused on other roles, such as a *defender of Uzbekistan's image* and *definer of authenticity*.

As the situation in Afghanistan re-entered the international public sphere in 2008, Washington adjusted by mitigating its reformist roles and tacitly endorsing *protecting stability* as its main public goal for Uzbekistan. This revamped compatibility with Tashkent and President Karimov made some rhetorical concessions on reform, without, however, upsetting the core group-types, i.e. *authenticity* and *technocracy*. So, by 2010 the two states focused almost exclusively on a security dimension, thereby avoiding public friction.

As concerns Germany and Uzbekistan, the story is less volatile than Tashkent's interaction with Moscow, Washington and Ankara. In short, cooperation was visible in the public sphere between these two actors because of role compatibility. President Karimov claimed technocratic roles, such as *developing the economy*, that were in turn acceded by Berlin as a number of German companies entered Uzbekistan's market. Moreover, German governments rarely if ever publicly contested President Karimov's *undisputed authority* and his claims for *stability*, mainly due to their concerns over the well-being of local German communities. Indeed, discretion was a key element in

Berlin's approach, letting it assert itself in the region while simultaneously implementing its traditional civilian roles, namely peacekeeping and development. Nevertheless, once Germany assumed security provision roles in the north of Afghanistan, and as it sought to implement a new EU partnership in 2007, Uzbekistan's visibility grew. Intra-role conflict was therefore on the rise as Germany's press and opposition parties questioned the credibility of its civilian roles, particularly the lack of importance given to Human Rights. Nevertheless, unlike with Washington, both the SPD and CDU controlled the majority in the *Bundestag* and built their credibility on returning Germany to normality and reasserting its interests abroad. Consequently, Berlin's intra-role conflict was never as ostentatious as in the United States, which resulted in fewer credibility problems. Germany could legitimate its interaction in a manner very similar to President Putin, by adjusting their rhetoric in a manner that 'nicified' President Karimov's roles.

Lastly, the Turkish-Uzbekistani relationship reveals that roles can clash with any state and not just with the so-called 'great powers.' The story has a deceptive start, since everything would suggest that Turkey's secular (Kemalist) roles would result in a cooperative relationship with Uzbekistan. However, behind these public manifestations, some rhetorical nuances hinted that there was in fact little compatibility, particularly with President Karimov's own predicates, such as *defending equality* and *de-ideologized* relationships. Ankara's initial patronizing stance could be seen as a way of ascertaining leadership in Central Asia, thereby conflicting with Tashkent's *equality*. Moreover, Ankara's ideas of cultural integration were hardly *de-ideologized*, contradicting President Karimov's preference for *technocratic* relations. This then became even more problematic once Turkey hosted important members of Uzbekistan's opposition in the end of 1993. However, the relationship managed not to deteriorate fully since Turkey also insisted on acclaiming President Karimov's *prestige* and *bridging* Eurasian markets.

Gradually, role conflict became a permanent feature in the relationship. Once the domestic and regional situations changed in both countries, different priorities came to the fore. Turkey's intra-role friction - between *secularism* and *Islamism* - became less concealed, and was hardly compatible with President Karimov's persistent appeals for *technocracy* and *protecting stability*. Therefore, Turkey's own alternating domestic landscape soon led to permanent inter-role conflict between the two states, given that political Islam, no matter its moderation, – as an ideological counter-weight to President Karimov's roles – explicitly contradicted Tashkent's public stance. Uzbekistani leadership responded to these changes by recalling students from Turkey and shutting Turkish schools, which in turn also fostered increased debate within

Turkey. Ankara's secular establishment did however show that it sought reconciliation, particularly as it tried to instigate its Ottomanist roles. However, Turkey did not have the financial means to boost President Karimov's role of *developer*, which, in addition to its pan-Turkic ideas, contradicted Tashkent's persistent appeal for *technocracy*, *protecting stability* and *defending equality*.

Suggestions for further inquiry

Chapter IV shows that both the end of the Soviet Union and the ruble zone reinforced President Karimov's appeals for *seeking genuine independence* and *defending equality*; a process that reveals how roles became prominent, but not how they originate. It seems that the end of the Soviet Union had a lasting impact on shaping President Karimov's rise to power, and so it would be interesting to revisit and expand James Critchlow's (1990) research on how Uzbekistani elites were affected by the Cotton Scandal of the 1980s. This would better contextualize the overall foreign policy behaviour of Tashkent, given that continuity seems to be an important theme within Uzbekistani society (Adams 2010: 7). *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* potentially had more impact in Uzbekistan than in other Central Asian Republics; perhaps explaining why President Karimov built his entire career on resisting change. Uzbekistani leadership, while often praising Russia, also has little qualms in lambasting against the injustices of the Soviet Era. These mixed emotions can offer important clues about the existing level of grievance with - and also admiration for - Russia and the Soviet past, which might clarify why equality was so important from the beginning and why change was so disdained. Critchlow (1990) seems to suggest that the age of reform in the Soviet Union had a strong impact on Uzbekistan's elites, many of whom may have felt they were being made scapegoats and portrayed unjustly. In fact, the concern with bolstering prestige and defending an image persisted since independence, even more so because some negative stereotypes regarding Uzbeks did not change and perhaps even deteriorated. Indeed, David Remnick (1994: 186-187) in his renowned bestseller of the fall of the 'Soviet Empire' barely described any Uzbek people, with the exception of one or two individuals, whom he portrays as *mafiosos*. Whether or not it is fair to describe Uzbekistan's politics in this way is beside the point. It does seem clear though that its leadership has been adamant in protecting the image of the country. Hence, a more comprehensive work on the impact of the last days of the Soviet Union would most likely reveal how Uzbekistan's experience may have differed from others, as well as its lasting impact on continuity and resisting change.

Besides the impact of the Soviet period, it would also be important to understand where President Karimov's role set came from and how it was formed. Regarding the history of ideas, it would be important to complement public roles with the very general 'Independence Idea' (*Mustaqillik Mafkurasi*), which was progressively endorsed by President Karimov's regime in the mid 1990s (Muminov 2010: 148-149). Given that this thesis is more concerned with classifying public themes rather than understanding their distinct local meanings, *Mustaqillik* was not central to the discussion herein because President Karimov never publicly declared that he was following a strict ideology. However, future analysis could probably verify how much President Karimov's rhetoric is influenced by that vague conception or whether in fact it is the other way round. It is mostly likely a mutually dependent relationship, and so it would be important to widen the spectrum from public rhetoric to the broader conception of discourse so as to identify who are the cultural and intellectual elites and how they have responded to the events happening around the world. Indeed, how much were President Karimov's ideas shaped by Uzbekistani intellectuals and technocrats? Edward Allworth (1990) and Anita Sengupta (2003) offer detailed accounts of how Uzbekistan and its historiography were gradually constructed by local elites during the Soviet Era. In spite of the secrecy of the regime, seeking to answer these questions might offer a better idea of Uzbekistani foreign policy making and how these ideas shaped Uzbekistan's controversial political ideas. It would also allow for understanding some political trends for the future, once President Karimov leaves office. Is internal debate prevalent or is Uzbekistan's President simply representing a dominant worldview? Given the level of cabinet reshuffling after the Andijan Crisis, it seems clear that not all is consensual.⁵⁷⁵

A better understanding of Tashkent's political ideas would also diminish some existing problems with depictions of Uzbekistan's politics, of which this thesis is also guilty. As argued by Laura Adams (2010), Nick Megoran (2008) and Sarah Kendzior (2007), the top-down hierarchy constantly applied to the country does not show how wider discourse influences Uzbekistan's politics. It is thus essential to comprehend how informal politics takes place and how both the system and its ideas affect foreign policy decisions. In this regard, a variety of works describe how regional rivalries, patrimonial competition and family connections affect local politics (e.g. Tunçer-Kilavuz 2009; Ilkhamov 2007; Collins 2006; Luong 2002, 1995). To a certain degree, these specific characteristics do not differ from those of any other political environment, yet the fact that Uzbekistan's political establishment is so opaque makes it even more important to understand who the principal pawn-brokers are and also the basis of their legitimacy.

⁵⁷⁵ Interview source (2009-2012). See Appendix IV for information regarding sources.

Given my own brief experiences in the country, it is difficult to talk about almost any political event. So, such a research goal would involve years of building trust, but further contributions to Uzbekistani politics still need to find ways of penetrating the complex system of informal politics and reveal its secluded and more private dimension to show how a number of decisions are made.

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Appendix II: Coding Rules for Content Analysis

A)

To avoid journalistic bias, statements have to be an ample body of text and not just selected quotations made by reporters. These will not enter the tabulations indicated above, but may nonetheless be used to later contextualize and discuss the results. The sources are all indicated in Appendix I.

B)

Analyze the paragraph (**P**) by filling in the table below and relating it to three variables: *Status*, *Motivational Orientation* and *Substantial Issue-area*. A paragraph may be related to more than one attribute in each given variable.

P	STATUS		MOTIVATIONAL ORIENTATION			SUBSTANTIAL ISSUE-AREAS								
	Capability	Status	Wish to expand	Coop/Comp	Systemic change	Eco	Security	Other	Political Aims		Universal		Unilateral	Integration
	(0,1,2,3)	(0,1,2,3)	(0,1,2)	(0,1,2)	(0,1,2,3,4)	(0;1)	(0;1)	(0;1)	+	-	+	-	(0;1)	(0;1)
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
Bi1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bi2	0	0	0	2	3	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
(ō)	(ō)	(ō)	(ō)	(ō)	(ō)	(ō)	(ō)	(ō)	(ō)	(ō)	(ō)	(ō)	(ō)	(ō)

- *Status* refers to which domestic endowments or capabilities leadership attributes greater absolute advantage (A) and how it perceives its relative position in the international system (B). The coding for those attributes works as follows:
 - o In the case of attribute A,
 - if there is no reference, mark 0;
 - if there is an indication of its human resources or people as being the primary quality place 1;
 - if there is an indication that its domestic resources are the main endowments, place 2
 - if there is an indication that qualities other than 1 and 2, such as culture, arts and language are the primary advantages, place 3.
 - o In the case of attribute B,
 - If there is no reference, mark 0;
 - If leadership argues that the state is less strong, influential, or powerful than others, place 1;
 - If leadership argues that the state is equally strong, place 2;
 - If leadership argues the state to be stronger, more influential or powerful than others place 3.
- *Motivational Orientation* corresponds to statements on political and international affairs, meaning if it is willing to expand internationally (C), if it is for being cooperative or competitive in politics (D) and to which degree it wishes to change both its internal and external system (E). Their numerical classification works as follows:
 - o In the case of attribute C,
 - If there is no reference, mark 0;
 - If there is an indication of willingness to participate in international affairs, place 1;
 - If there is a reference of unwillingness to participate in international affairs, place 2;
 - o In the case of attribute D
 - If there is no reference, mark 0;
 - If there is a reference to the following sub-categories, place 1:
 - If it rejects verbal or physical conflict;
 - If it emphasizes cooperation with others;

- If it does not argue against opponents, different ideologies or points of view;
 - If it connotes either a positive outlook or neutral one toward known opponents.
- If references oppose the cases above, place 2.
- In the case of attribute E,
 - If there is no reference, mark 0;
 - If there is a reference calling for a change in the international political arena, borders, or of global norms, place 1;
 - If there is a reference calling for the *status quo*, place 2;
 - If there is a reference to internal reform, place 3;
 - If there is a reference to not wishing to pursue internal reform, or a reluctance to do so, place 4⁵⁷⁶.
- *Substantial Issue-area* corresponds to the main themes being discussed: economics (F), security (G), others (H), such as culture or history, the defence or dismissal of political ideologies and systems (I,J)⁵⁷⁷, the defence or dismissal of universal values (K,L), the pursuit of unilateral goals or own interests (M), the wish to practice bilateral, multi-lateral or political/economic integration with other partners (N).⁵⁷⁸ Their numerical classification works as follows:
 - In the case of attribute F,
 - If there is no reference, mark 0;
 - If there is an emphasis on economic related issues, place 1;
 - In the case of attribute G,
 - If there is no reference, mark 0;
 - If there is an emphasis on security related issues, such as imminent threats, military goals, social crises, wars, revolution, place 1;
 - In the case of attribute H,
 - If there is no reference, mark 0;
 - If the attribute is discussing environment, culture, history, or issues no related to foreign policy, economics or security, place 1;
 - In the case of attribute I
 - If there is no reference, mark 0;
 - If leadership is emphasizing the benefits of a political system, such as democracy or authoritarianism, mark 1;
 - In the case of attribute J,
 - If there is no reference, mark 0;
 - If leadership is emphasizing the downfalls of a political system, such as democracy or authoritarianism, mark 1;
 - In the case of attribute K,
 - If there is no reference, mark 0;
 - If leadership is arguing for the respect for universal values, such as respect for certain human rights, place 1;
 - In the case of attribute L,
 - If there is no reference, mark 0;
 - If leadership is arguing against universal values, place 1.
 - In the case of attribute M,
 - If there is no reference, mark 0;
 - If leadership emphasizes the pursuit of its own goals or isolationism rather than the wish to follow a path of international integration or multi-lateral contacts, fill in 1;
 - In the case of attribute N,
 - If there is no reference, mark 0;
 - If leadership emphasizes the opposite of what is indicated in M, fill in 1.

⁵⁷⁶ Recognizing the reluctance to actually pursue reform is a difficult task. Perhaps the best way of classifying such an attribute is by assuming that reluctance exists when an actual leader underlines more the difficulties of pursuing reform, instead of actually emphasizing the advantages.

⁵⁷⁷ The emphasis on *Political Aims* is given primarily to political ideologies and systems.

⁵⁷⁸ Paragraphs may discuss more than one issue and they should all be accounted for. Nevertheless, if the emphasis is clearly given to one over the other, the least important one should not be accounted for.

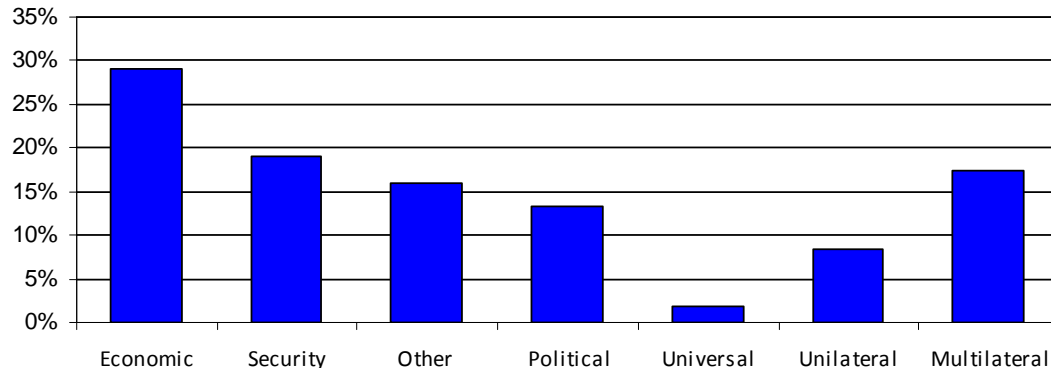
Appendix III: Content analysis on status, motivational orientation and issue-areas

Table 4: Sample Description			
Periods	Number of Speeches /Statements	Total Paragraphs	Total Issue-area Assertions
1989-1993	36	313	392
1994-2001	181	1929	1908
2002-2005	80	1314	1408
2006-2008	52	853	917
2009-2010	31	673	705
<u>1989-2010</u>	<u>380</u>	<u>5082</u>	<u>5330</u>

A total of 380 statements and speeches were categorized by status, motivational orientation and issue-areas according to Wish's (1980) paradigm for national role conceptions. The following categorizations, especially the discussion on substantial issue-areas demonstrate the *quantity* of themes discussed by President Karimov.

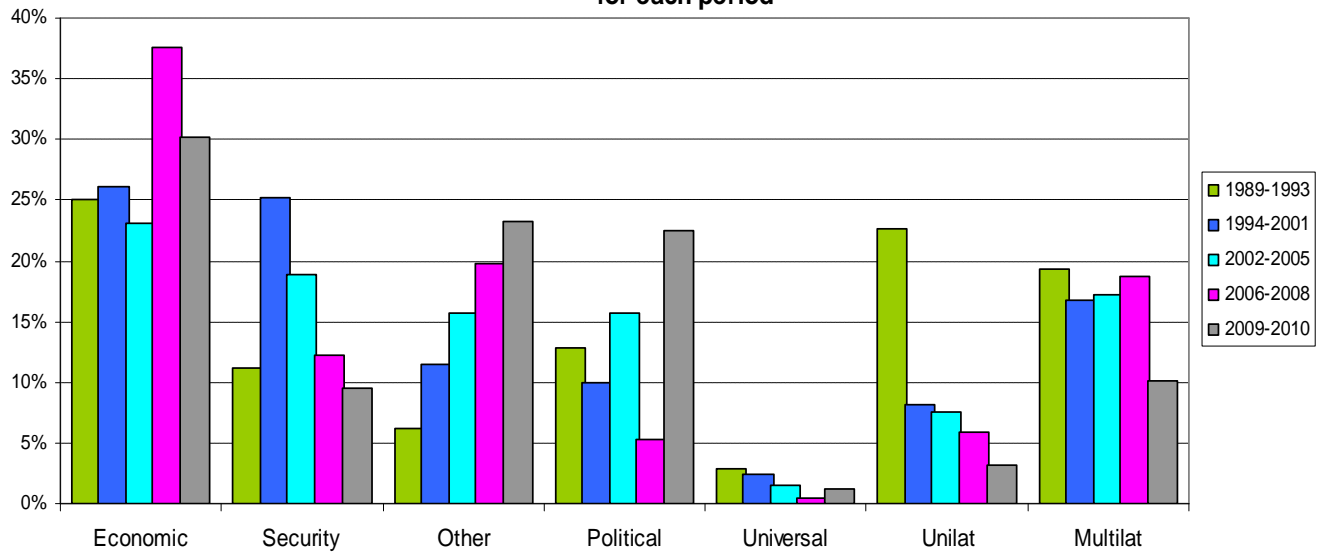
Substantial issue-areas

Graph 1: Substantial Issue Areas 1989-2010
as a percentage of total paragraphs



According to Graph 1, the issue that dominated President Karimov's rhetoric between 1989 and 2010 was economics, accounting for nearly 30% of all analyzed paragraphs. In second place came both security and international cooperation; both above the 15% mark. Other issues and politics were relatively frequent and the lowest rankings are unilateralism and universal values. The latter was classified in only 2% of all paragraphs.

Graph 2: Issue Areas from 1989 to 2010 as a percentage of total assertions for each period



When looking at how issue-areas varied through time, economic related issues were the main theme discussed at any given time period. President Karimov tends to start many of his formal parliamentary speeches by presenting lengthy accounts of Uzbekistan's macroeconomic situation. Also, when questioned by sceptical media he habitually reveals economic figures to reinforce the prowess of his country's performance. As Graph 2 reveals, these became particularly prominent after 2006, when President Karimov declared frequently that Uzbekistan was able to avoid economic crisis.

Both security and political issues were relatively volatile. The former was invoked mostly in the 1990s, which suggests that they are heavily correlated with the civil wars in Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Other issues-areas increased steadily since independence, showing the growing importance that President Karimov gave to Uzbekistan's culture, spirituality ('Manaviyat') and ideology. It is also interesting to observe how in a post-Andijan crisis scenario these matters of cultural authenticity subsumed around 20% of the assertions between 2006 and 2008 and then nearly 25% after 2009.

Both graphs 1 and 2 also show the pervasive concern of President Karimov with international politics. If one adds the multilateral issue-area assertions with the unilateral ones, it becomes evident that external matters were routinely discussed. Also interesting to note is that multilateral concerns are a relatively stable and recurrent theme and tended to outrank unilateralism.

Table 2 below shows which were most numerous composite issue-areas articulated by President Karimov. The three main themes indicated in Table 2, demonstrates the relevance given by President Karimov to external affairs. The most recurrent interconnected theme was international economic cooperation which accounted for 7% of total analyzed paragraphs and 27% of all interrelated assertions.

Table 2: Interrelationships between attributes 1989-2001			
	<i>Absolute Frequency of assertions</i>	<i>% of total interrelated assertions</i>	<i>% of total paragraphs</i>
1) Economic/Multilateral	376	27	7
2) Security/Multilateral	229	17	5
3) Security/Unilateral	121	9	2
4) Economic/Unilateral	110	8	2
5) Other/Economic	79	6	2
6) Economic/Security	78	6	2
7) Other/Political	67	5	1
8) Economic/Political	55	4	1
9) Other/Multilateral	42	3	1
10) Security/Other	40	3	1
11) Other/Unilateral	39	3	1
12) Security/Political	31	2	1
13) Political/Unilateral	26	2	1
14) Security/Universal	21	2	0
15) Other/Universal	14	1	0
16) Political/Universal	15	1	0
17) Economic/Universal	9	1	0
18) Political/Multilateral	14	1	0
19) Universal/Multilateral	11	1	0
20) Universal/Unilateral	4	0	0
TOTAL interrelations	1381	100	-

The fourth interrelationship indicated in table 2 is a key connection to take into account, since President Karimov frequently emphasized the importance of economic self-sufficiency.⁵⁷⁹ Accordingly, he made recurrent announcements about the need of mitigating economic dependence, which may conflict with the apparent wish to propound trade.

The fifth category, Other/Economic, is associated primarily with statements calling for the interests of economic growth and justice to be intertwined. As President Karimov claimed gradual economic reform, he would state the need of not forgetting those left behind. Hence, welfare issues were frequently discussed, particularly to emphasize the importance of the state.⁵⁸⁰ This subject may also be connected to the sixth interrelationship, namely tying security to economics. President Karimov consistently invoked attaining economic stability to prevent social upheaval - arguments that were especially predominant in the early 1990s, when economics and security were the two most discussed issues.

Finally, Table 2 reveals President Karimov's dominant concern with security. Even though economics is the issue that was most articulated, it is not the most interconnected issue-

⁵⁷⁹ See for example "Speech by the President of Uzbek SSR" *Russian Press Digest*, 25 March 1990.

⁵⁸⁰ See for example "Karimov interview with a Russian Paper" *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 1 June 1994.

area. Accordingly, economics is connected to five other variables (multilateral, unilateral, other, political and security), whilst security to six (multilateral, unilateral, other, political, security and universal). Moreover, if one were to remove economic/multilateral and security/multilateral assertions from Table 2, themes connected to security would be almost systematic. Security is therefore the subject matter that tends to permeate all his rhetoric, implying that almost all issues are securitized and presented as potential threats to a particular way of life.

Status

Table 3: Status from 1989 to 2010	
	% of total status assertions
Capability	
<i>People</i>	29
<i>Economic Resources</i>	48
<i>Military</i>	15
<i>Other</i>	8
Status toward others	
<i>Less</i>	5
<i>Equal</i>	93
<i>More</i>	2

The status variable is divided into two categories (capabilities and status toward others) and seven respective sub-categories, each describing different subjects. As concerns capability, Uzbekistani leadership overwhelmingly underlined the country's economic resources and the quality of its people as the prime advantages to face the international system. President Karimov argued continuously that Uzbekistan's main absolute advantage resides in its economic resources, specifically in the country's endowments, such as oil, gas, cotton, fruits and vegetables. A second but important quality President Karimov underlined was his people's readiness for the challenge of transition, especially during the immediate independence period.

President Karimov was not militaristic in spite of arguing persistently for Uzbekistan to maintain its own forces; but not necessarily to oppose anyone besides invaders.⁵⁸¹ Furthermore, assertions with regards to military capabilities were perhaps the most volatile ones; even though they were mentioned less than economic and human resources, they rose from 1994 to 2001 and also after the Andijan crisis.⁵⁸²

Local culture or history was rarely articulated as an advantage for engaging with the international system. Besides economic, human and military factors, only the geography of

⁵⁸¹ See for instance -öSpeaking of borders means breaking up Central Asia: Islam Karimov Speaks in an Interview with Foreign Journalistsö*Kremlin News Broadcast*, 15 May 1992.

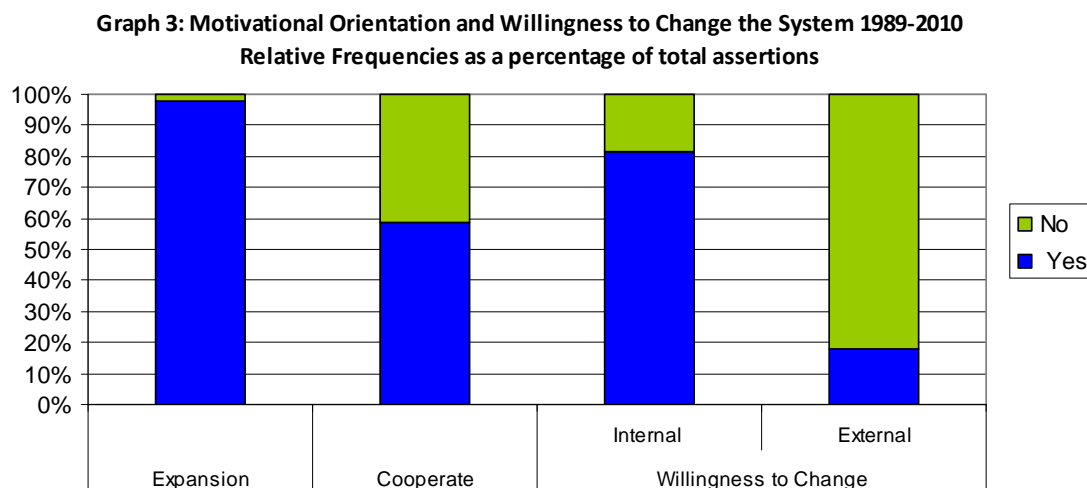
⁵⁸² These observations are based on analyzing the relative frequencies and were not statistically tested. Yet it is not too farfetched to assume that they were not random incidents but genuine increases because of the increased military threats coming from the Taliban in the 1990s.

Uzbekistan was frequently presented as a capability or advantage. Nevertheless, this category was difficult to code because while President Karimov sometimes recognized the potential of Uzbekistan's geographical position, he would in other circumstances mention that it was a drawback.⁵⁸³

Statements deliberating that Uzbekistan was a lesser partner were rarely mentioned. However, the contexts and the persistence with which President Karimov argued for equality bring a degree of subjectivity to coding and therewith to Table 2. Indeed, the constant emphasis given to equality might hide an inferiority complex. For example, he argued in 2004 that his country should not be treated in a backward manner, rather as an equal one by other more advanced economies.⁵⁸⁴ Regardless of the subjectivity of the explicit calls for equality, references were usually coded as equal unless the complex was clearly shown, such as in the case when President Karimov underlined that Uzbekistan was not strong enough to achieve independence by itself.⁵⁸⁵

Lastly, there were a few explicit references to Uzbekistan having greater than other status. These statements tended to be hidden through certain wordings. For example, an interesting indication occurred during a heated moment in October 1999 when the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan mobilized into Kyrgyzstan. At the time, President Karimov said that his country's armed forces had the right to enter the territory of neighbouring states to defend their own people,⁵⁸⁶ thereby demonstrating that he considered Uzbekistan to be more than powerful enough to intervene.

Motivational orientation



⁵⁸³ See for example 'Uzbek President Interviewed on visit to Ukraine aboard aircraft' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 10 October 1999.

⁵⁸⁴ 'Uzbek leader says God saved Uzbekistan during recent terror attacks' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 7 April 2004.

⁵⁸⁵ 'Uzbek President Tells 'Pravda' he is looking for Cooperation, not aid' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 7 August 1993.

⁵⁸⁶ See for example 'Uzbek President Vows to defend his territory 'with all available means' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 20 October 1999.

Graph 1 illustrates three *Motivational Orientation* variables as percentages of their total assertions: *Wish to expand or participate in international affairs*; *Cooperative/Competitive* and *Willingness to change*.

As regards the wish to participate category, President Karimov expounded to be fully in favour of Uzbekistan participating in international affairs. References to this variable were 98% of total motivational orientation assertions. Logically, as a percentage of total paragraphs, these kinds of statements were much lower, around 2%. Still, very few arguments denoted a reluctant attitude toward participating in international affairs. Only before independence was a degree of unwillingness to participate in international affairs found, as President Karimov mentioned that it was too early to consider whether the jurisdiction of Uzbek SSR should fall under international law.⁵⁸⁷

Regarding the *Cooperation/Competitive* attribute, President Karimov's assertions from 1989 to 2010 tend to be worded in a cooperative manner (around 60% of assertions) or, in other words, without portraying negatively certain issues or actors. However, these different wordings depend very much on the issue that was being argued. For example, in the pre-independence period, competitive references were slightly higher. When the Union treaty was being reformed, President Karimov showed again and again impatience toward the way journalists summarized his public statements. After independence he continued to make negative allusions against cooperating with specific political rivals or the media. Also, during the 1990s, competitive assertions were used to describe the general threat of terrorism and, after 2002, to portray the activities of NGOs.

Cooperative references occurred usually when subject-areas were not related to politics or journalism, such as economics. Also, after international summits, such as CIS or SCO meetings, he remained mostly cordial.

As for the *Willingness to change* attribute (see Graph 1), President Karimov showed himself to be a reluctant changer of the international system. Before independence, there were no obvious pro-external external change assertions, given that Uzbekistan was not yet independent. During this period, though, he was in favour of reforming the Soviet space, especially on matters of constitutional revision and economic dependence on Moscow. Looking to statements after independence, little willingness for changing the international system was shown. For example, President Karimov rejected the aims of major regional institutions, such as the CIS. Also, he constantly argued for respecting sovereignty and delivered routine statements calling for respect of all borders and internal differences between countries.

Nonetheless, outliers existed, particularly for issues outside Central Asia. He stated that he was in favour of Security Council reform if it meant granting permanent seats to Germany and Japan (coincidentally, two of Uzbekistan's biggest commercial partners).⁵⁸⁸ Moreover,

⁵⁸⁷ See for example 'President of Uzbekistan interviewed' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*. 15 April 1991.

⁵⁸⁸ See for example 'Uzbek leader supports UNSCE seat for Japan' *Japan Economic Newswire*, May 17 1995.

during the second Iraqi invasion debate, in 2003, he positioned himself deliberately against Saddam's regime and favoured the 'coalition of the willing.'

Graph 1 also shows that President Karimov portrayed himself as an internal reformer (81% of all willingness to change assertions). Uzbekistani leadership constantly discussed the need of adopting market reforms (which does not mean that they were actually implemented). Still, it is important to note that these references were usually accompanied by a disclaimer invoking the need for gradual change, which may be interpreted as actual reluctance to reform. Also, he showed some concern for economic reform but little for political change. In fact, interest in political reform only became slightly more prominent after 2001 and in 2008, which suggests that Washington's involvement in the country triggered a certain kind of pro-democratic discourse.

Appendix IV: Ethical considerations for interviewees

I conducted thirteen interviews during my visits to Uzbekistan although they were not a significant feature of my research. The closed nature of the regime as well as my lack of contacts in the country prevented me from engaging with important political actors in Uzbekistan. Nonetheless, the interviews were perhaps relevant to raise my awareness on some issues.

I contacted most interviewees to check whether they would be available to answer some questions about the regime. Most interviews were structured around a pre-determined set of questions on foreign policy, but I otherwise allowed respondents to digress on what they felt were the important issues for around thirty to forty minutes.

The interview could have brought some risk to the participant, given the authoritarian nature of Uzbekistan's regime. To minimize that risk, any information on the interviewees is not accessible and all their responses are made strictly confidential and anonymous. Accordingly, all respondents are encoded and no description of the interviewee, such as the nature of his/her work and the date of our meetings, is indicated throughout my research.

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